

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF J.K. ROWLING

Rowling's father was an aircraft mechanic and her mother was a science technician. She was the first of two children and has said that she was a very unhappy teen: her mother suffered from multiple sclerosis and her relationship with her father was strained. She graduated from the University of Exeter in 1986 and then worked as a researcher and a secretary in London. She conceived of the first Harry Potter book in 1990 and began to write immediately. Rowling's mother died in December of that year, and Rowling channeled much of her grief into the novel. Over the next few years, Rowling married, had her first daughter, divorced, and signed up for welfare benefits. She finished *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1995 and, after its publication in 1997, Rowling began her rise to fame. The proceeds from the U.S. auction for the publishing rights allowed Rowling to buy a flat in Edinburgh and, over the next ten years, Rowling wrote and published the next six books in the series. She also remarried in 2001 and had two more children. In 2004, she became the first billionaire to make her fortune writing books, though her donations to charity mean that she's since lost her billionaire status. She published several crime novels under the pen name Robert Galbraith and has written the screenplays for the films in the Fantastic Beasts franchise.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Though a work of fantasy, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* closely reflects the time period in which Rowling was writing. Though the fall of the Ministry and the fear and paranoia represent an extreme, the general tenor of fear and the sense that it's impossible to trust the government reflect the anxieties that bloomed in the post-9/11 world in both the US and the UK. Voldemort and the Death Eaters can more generally be linked to the rise of the Nazis and Hitler in pre-World War Two Germany (specifically, the Muggle-born registry and taking wands from those who are judged to be not real wizards draws on specific actions the Nazis took to target Jews), though it's also possible to read Voldemort and his desire for a monolithic, pureblooded society as a more contemporary metaphor for the rise of Islamophobia, bigotry, and increasing nationalism that skyrocketed after 9/11.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Following the completion of the Harry Potter series, Rowling published *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, which joined the already-published companion texts such as *Quidditch Through the Ages*

and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. The Harry Potter series has been a major cultural phenomenon since the first one was published; to this end, a number of novels, especially those concerning young characters, mention the series. These include *My Grandmother Asked Me To Tell You She's Sorry* by Fredrik Backman, as well as [On the Come Up](#) by Angie Thomas. The series falls into a specific trope known as the "chosen one" trope, in which a character is marked for greatness and has no choice but to follow that destiny. Another book with this trope is *Girl of Flower and Thorns* by Rae Carson. However, several authors have started to pick apart and question this trope, most notably in Rainbow Rowell's novel *Carry On*, which asks questions about what it's like to be an untalented "chosen one," and Patrick Ness's *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
- **When Written:** 2005-2006
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 2007
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Fantasy, bildungsroman
- **Setting:** England
- **Climax:** Harry defeats Voldemort
- **Antagonist:** Lord Voldemort
- **Point of View:** Third-person limited

EXTRA CREDIT

Books vs. Movies. While all of the books in the Harry Potter series have won awards, none of the corresponding film adaptations have—though collectively, the films were nominated for twelve Academy Awards. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 2* was, however, the highest-grossing film of 2011, as well as the highest-grossing film of the series.

Planning for Death. In addition to meticulously planning out the plots of all of her novels, Rowling wrote how the series was going to end (specifically that Hagrid was going to carry Harry's body out of the forest) very early on in the process. This made Hagrid one of the few characters who was safe from being killed off, unlike Arthur Weasley and even Ron, whom Rowling considered killing at several points while writing.



PLOT SUMMARY

At Malfoy Manor, Snape explains that the Order of the Phoenix

plans to move Harry in a few days. Voldemort asks Lucius Malfoy for his wand—he needs it to kill Harry. At the Dursleys' house, Harry reads an obituary for Dumbledore and learns that Rita Skeeter will publish a biography on Dumbledore. Harry believes he sees Dumbledore's eye in a piece of enchanted mirror. The Order arrives for Harry and explains the plan: six of them will transform into Harry using Polyjuice Potion, and each will go to a different safe house. However, once the plan is in action, Death Eaters surround Harry and kill Hedwig, and Hagrid's motorcycle crashes. George loses an ear and Mad-Eye Moody dies. Harry sees a vision of Voldemort torturing the wandmaker Ollivander for giving him bad information.

Over the next week, Mrs. Weasley keeps Harry, Ron, and Hermione so busy with preparations for Bill and Fleur's wedding that they don't have a chance to plan their hunt for the Horcruxes. Though Harry tries to convince Ron and Hermione to not come with him, they insist on coming. Scrimgeour, the Minister of Magic, stops by to give the trio what Dumbledore left them in his will: *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* for Hermione; his Deluminator for Ron; and the first Snitch Harry caught for Harry. Dumbledore intended for Harry to receive the sword of Gryffindor, but Scrimgeour refuses to pass it on.

Harry attends the wedding in disguise as a Weasley cousin. He reunites with Viktor Krum, who's upset that Luna Lovegood's father, Xenophilius, is wearing the evil wizard Grindelwald's symbol, and gets involved in an argument between Elphias Doge and Auntie Muriel about Dumbledore. Muriel insists that Dumbledore's past is sketchy. A Patronus arrives and says that Voldemort took over the Ministry. Hermione quickly Disapparates with Harry and Ron to the middle of London. Two Death Eaters attack them, but the trio manages to escape to number twelve, Grimmauld Place.

At Grimmauld Place the next morning, Harry discovers that Sirius's brother, Regulus Arcturus Black, might be the R.A.B. from the locket. He summons Kreacher, who confirms this: Regulus tried to undermine Voldemort. Harry sends Kreacher to find Mundungus, who stole the real Horcrux. Lupin stops by a while later and offers to help the trio, but Harry declines. Kreacher returns with Mundungus soon after, who admits that Dolores Umbridge stole the locket. The trio begin planning to infiltrate the Ministry and steal it back.

Using Polyjuice Potion to disguise themselves as employees, the trio sneak into the Ministry of Magic, where Harry discovers that Moody's magical eye being used to spy on employees. He steals it and then Stuns Umbridge in the middle of court proceedings trying Muggle-borns. He and Hermione take the locket, help the Muggle-borns awaiting trial to escape, and then Disapparate for Grimmauld Place with Ron—but a Death Eater holds on and comes with them, and he sees Grimmauld Place. Hermione whisks them away to a deserted field, and they begin camping and moving through the countryside. Harry insists that they wear the locket for

safekeeping, even though it makes the wearer unusually irritable. It affects Ron the worst. Harry sees in a vision that Voldemort is chasing a golden-haired man who stole something from the wandmaker Gregorovitch.

One rainy evening, Harry, Ron, and Hermione hear people coming. They listen as Ted Tonks, Dirk Cresswell, Dean Thomas, and the goblins Griphook and Gornuk discuss that several students, including Ginny, tried to steal the sword of Gryffindor from Snape, who is now the Hogwarts headmaster. The goblins giggle that the sword at Hogwarts is a fake. Hermione pulls out the portrait of Phineas Nigellus, which she stole from Grimmauld Place, to ask him about things at Hogwarts. He tells her that Dumbledore last used the sword to destroy a ring, and Harry and Hermione are thrilled to have figured out that Dumbledore left Harry the sword so he could destroy Horcruxes. Ron, however, is unimpressed and in a fit of rage, he leaves. Hermione cries for days.

Around Christmas, Hermione agrees to go to Godric's Hollow. Disguise as Muggles, she and Harry find the graves of Kendra and Ariana Dumbledore, as well as Lily and James's graves. As they leave town, old Bathilda Bagshot stops them and invites them into her home, which reeks. Harry finds a photograph of the golden-haired thief and follows Bathilda upstairs, asking for the sword. To his horror, the snake Nagini uncoils grotesquely out of Bathilda's body and Hermione barely manages to get them out alive. Harry finds himself in Voldemort's mind, reliving the night that Voldemort killed his parents. When he wakes, he learns that his wand broke in the scuffle, and Hermione reveals that she stole Skeeter's biography of Dumbledore from Bathilda. This allows them to identify the thief as Grindelwald, a friend of Dumbledore's. Harry is disturbed to learn that Dumbledore flirted with a plan to dominate over Muggles as a young man.

A few nights later, while Harry is keeping watch, a silvery doe approaches and leads him to a frozen pool. The sword of Gryffindor is at the bottom. Harry strips and dives, but the Horcrux tries to strangle him. He comes to on the bank: Ron saved him and got the sword. Harry lets Ron stab the Horcrux, which voices all of Ron's greatest fears before it dies. Hermione is incensed to see Ron again. Ron explains that the Deluminator led him back; that there are people called Snatchers out looking for wanted people; and that saying Voldemort's name alerts the Ministry. He has an extra wand for Harry.

Hermione, after noticing the strange symbol in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* and in Dumbledore's biography, insists they visit Xenophilius to ask him about it. He nervously tells them that it's the mark of the Deathly Hallows, which are three objects—the [Elder Wand](#), the Resurrection Stone, and the Invisibility Cloak—that make a person master of death. He also reveals that the Death Eaters kidnapped Luna, and tries to turn in the trio. They escape, and Harry becomes obsessed with finding the Hallows.

One evening, Harry accidentally utters Voldemort's name and Snatchers, including Fenrir Greyback, arrive. Hermione curses Harry's face so he's unrecognizable, but Greyback sees through it. He takes his captives, including Dean and Griphook, to Malfoy Manor. There, Bellatrix Lestrange is terrified and incensed to see the sword of Gryffindor, which is supposed to be in her Gringotts vault. She tortures Hermione, and Harry asks Griphook to identify the sword as a fake. Harry sees Dumbledore's eye in the mirror fragment and asks for help. Dobby appears a minute later and begins to Disapparate with Luna and Ollivander, who are imprisoned in the cellar. Harry manages to steal wands from Draco and Disapparate, but Bellatrix throws a knife that hits Dobby. Dobby dies in Harry's arms outside of Bill and Fleur's cottage, and Harry digs the grave by hand. Harry now knows what Voldemort is after—the Elder Wand, which belonged to Dumbledore—but he decides to dedicate himself to going after the Horcruxes instead.

With Griphook, the trio begins plotting to break into the Lestranges' Gringotts vault by having Hermione impersonate Bellatrix. They agree to give Griphook the sword in exchange, but at a later date. The plan goes reasonably well; they manage to steal another Horcrux and escape on the blind dragon that guards the vaults, though Griphook runs away with the sword. When they land, however, Harry sees that Voldemort knows that they're targeting his Horcruxes. As Voldemort thinks that there's one at Hogwarts, Harry insists they have to go to Hogwarts before Voldemort gets there. They Apparate into Hogsmeade, which sets off alarms, but Aberforth Dumbledore, the barman at the Hog's Head and Dumbledore's brother, saves them. He tells them the truth about Ariana: that she repressed her magic after being abused by Muggle boys, and that Dumbledore felt burdened by her. He encourages Harry to abandon Dumbledore's plan, but Harry insists on getting into Hogwarts. Aberforth agrees and a portrait of Ariana fetches Neville. Neville and other students have been hiding in the Room of Requirement and are thrilled to fight Snape. Harry grudgingly agrees to let them help as he looks for Ravenclaw's diadem, which he believes is the final Horcrux.

The Death Eater Alecto Carrow catches Harry in the Ravenclaw common room, but Luna and McGonagall save him. McGonagall, Sprout, and Flitwick duel with Snape, who leaves to join Voldemort, and then they begin to secure the school. Harry confirms that the diadem is the final Horcrux while Ron and Hermione sneak into the Chamber of Secrets and destroy the cup Horcrux with a basilisk fang. They all go into the iteration of the Room of Requirement where objects are hidden, but Draco, Crabbe, and Goyle interrupt them. They find the diadem, but Crabbe conjures Fiendfyre—which destroys the Horcrux—but dies in the inferno. Members of the Order of the Phoenix arrive and the battle begins. Harry sees Fred die and Hagrid be carried into the Forbidden Forest by giant spiders. Voldemort is with Nagini in the Shrieking Shack, and

Harry sneaks toward him in the hope of killing Nagini, who's also a Horcrux. Instead, he watches Voldemort murder Snape and then leave. Snape gives Harry memories before he dies.

Harry views the memories in the Pensieve. He learns that Snape has been working for Dumbledore the entire time because he's loved Lily since they were children, and Harry learns that Harry himself is the final Horcrux and needs to die, willingly, at Voldemort's hand. Harry discovers the Resurrection Stone in the Snitch and conjures his parents, Lupin, who died in the battle, and Sirius. Voldemort kills Harry, and Harry finds himself in a dreamy, white space, where Dumbledore is waiting for him. Dumbledore praises Harry, says that Harry is still alive, and explains how he orchestrated Harry's journey. Harry realizes that because Draco Disarmed Dumbledore before Dumbledore died, and because Harry then Disarmed Draco, *Harry* is the true master of the Elder Wand.

Harry chooses to return to life. He pretends to be dead, and Narcissa Malfoy, wanting to get to Hogwarts and find Draco, lies and says that he's dead. Hagrid carries Harry out of the forest. Voldemort tries to torture Neville by putting the [Sorting Hat](#) on his head and setting him on fire, but his curses don't function properly—Neville breaks free and kills Nagini. Mrs. Weasley kills Bellatrix, while Harry gives Voldemort the opportunity to repent. Harry responds to Voldemort's killing curse with a Disarming spell, and the killing curse backfires. Voldemort dies. Harry uses the Elder Wand to repair his original wand.

Nineteen years later, Harry and Ginny put their son, Albus Severus, on the Hogwarts Express. Albus is concerned he's going to end up in Slytherin, but Harry reminds his son that one of the bravest headmasters ever, Severus Snape, was from Slytherin.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Harry Potter – The titular protagonist of the novel. Harry is a seventeen-year-old wizard who is prophesied to be the only person capable of killing the Dark Lord Voldemort as the one person capable of killing Voldemort. To this end, Harry spent the previous year working closely with Dumbledore to discover Horcruxes, which Harry must find and destroy. Though Harry is a competent wizard and is especially good at defensive spells, he comes under fire at several points for not killing or hurting people who tried to kill him. Harry insists that this is because he's *not* like Voldemort; he's uninterested in killing people for no reason. Harry also shows himself to be devoted to his friends and extremely trusting, something that Lupin suggests that Harry inherited from his father. Though Harry is accepting of his fate and knows that he has to defeat Voldemort, he hates the fact that others will die to help him achieve his goals and,

indeed, that they're willing to do so. He feels intermittently unworthy of Hermione and Ron's support and faith in him, and he struggles throughout the novel with the suspicion that Dumbledore both didn't love him and didn't leave him enough information to accomplish his task. This leads Harry to question his entire mission, as he hates not being able to figure out what Dumbledore truly wanted him to do. Harry chooses to reaffirm his belief in Dumbledore and decides that Dumbledore had a plan and intended to keep Harry in the dark about some things, which Harry is able to confirm when he views Snape's memories in the Pensieve. At this point, Harry realizes that his mental connection to Voldemort exists because Harry himself is the final Horcrux. Once Harry realizes that he needs to die, he recognizes the importance of killing as few people as possible—that is, himself and Voldemort—and he gives his life willingly. His desire to speak to Dumbledore again manifests in a dream-like conversation with Dumbledore, in which Dumbledore helps Harry make sense of what he knows and gives Harry the tools to emerge victorious. He later marries Ginny and passes on what he learned to his sons.

Ron Weasley – One of Harry's best friends and the second youngest Weasley child. Ron is tall with red hair, and he's extremely protective of the women in his life—he makes a number of gallant yet ultimately silly attempts to protect Hermione, and he also calls Harry out on messing around with his younger sister, Ginny. Though Ron is extremely loyal to Harry and insists on coming with him to help with the hunt for Horcruxes, Ron proves a difficult person to be on the run with. While things go fine at Grimmauld Place with Kreacher to cook for them, Ron becomes mean and nasty while camping due to a lack of food and not having a warm bed. He's the most significantly affected by the locket Horcrux and, one evening, he leaves Harry and Hermione in a towering rage. However, he later is able to come back thanks to the Deluminator that Dumbledore left him in his will. When he tries to destroy the locket Horcrux, the locket gives voice to Ron's deepest fears: that nobody likes him, that he's unintelligent, and especially that Harry and Hermione are romantically involved. While none of these things are entirely true, Ron has spent his life feeling insignificant and unloved as the youngest of six brothers and especially as Harry's best friend, since Harry is famous and gets all the attention. Though Ron also isn't unintelligent, his critical thinking skills are questionable at times. Following his return to Harry and Hermione, Ron begins to come into himself and his leadership skills and starts to take charge. He remains unwaveringly loyal to Dumbledore, even when Harry struggles to do the same, and is willing to forgive Dumbledore's youthful transgressions and concentrates instead on all of the good that Dumbledore did in his later years. Ron truly comes of age in Hermione's eyes when he suggests that they need to evacuate the house-elves from Hogwarts. Ron and Hermione later marry and have two children. In his late thirties, Ron seems to have come to terms with his lack of fame, but suggests that he still

holds onto some childhood grudges.

Hermione Granger – One of Harry's best friends. Hermione is extremely intelligent, relies heavily on books, and was an exceptional and overachieving student in school. Her intelligence and her magical capabilities are most often responsible for Harry, Ron, and her success once they go on the run. She places an Extension Charm on a small beaded purse, which allows her to carry a library as well as a variety of other necessities to help them on their way. Like Ron, Hermione remains loyal to Dumbledore and refuses to believe everything that Rita Skeeter wrote in her biography of him. Instead, she reminds Harry that Skeeter isn't reliable, and that since Skeeter disliked Dumbledore, she's bound to have listed untrue things as facts. She remains a voice of reason for Harry and insists that Dumbledore cared about Harry and had a plan, though Ron later reveals that Hermione certainly has her doubts—she just doesn't voice them to Harry like Ron ultimately does. Though Hermione is instrumental in figuring out what the Deathly Hallows are, she struggles to believe in them and when she learns that the [Elder Wand](#) is indeed real, she insists that it's evil and that it wasn't worth pursuing. She remains firm in her insistence that they need to follow Dumbledore's orders and continue to hunt for Horcruxes rather than get sidetracked with the Hallows. Hermione also stays firm in her loyalty to Harry, and she becomes angrier than Harry has ever seen her when Ron returns after abandoning them. She's been interested in improving the lives of non-human beings for years, and she's finally able to put some of her ideas in practice with Kreacher—to whom she's finally able to show respect—and with Griphook, as she insists that she, Harry, and Ron need to treat the goblin fairly and not behave like countless other wizards who have abused their relationships with non-magical creatures. Hermione finally admits that she loves Ron when he insists on evacuating the house-elves from Hogwarts. She and Ron later marry and have two children.

Lord Voldemort – The antagonist of the novel. Voldemort was born Tom Riddle and dedicated his life to the Dark Arts, world domination in the form of a wizard-centric pureblooded society, and the pursuit of immortality. The quest for immortality led Voldemort to create Horcruxes, or objects that house parts of his soul, since he cannot truly die while the Horcruxes exist. Though Voldemort always intended to make seven, he incorrectly believes that he only made six—Harry is the unknown final Horcrux, but having his soul split so many ways means that Voldemort's soul is too fragile for him to recognize this. A person must kill in order to make a Horcrux, and Voldemort in his cruelty has no problem with this. He's known as the most evil wizard in history and kills people for any reason, or no reason at all. He goes about achieving world domination by targeting both Muggles and witches and wizards born to Muggles, as he desperately wants to create a world in which wizards and other Dark creatures, like dementors, reign.

Harry knows, however, that this is rooted in a deep desire to belong to the Wizarding world and, specifically, to belong at Hogwarts. This is why Voldemort chose objects that belonged to the four Hogwarts founders to turn into Horcruxes, and it is why he hid the final Horcrux at Hogwarts. Despite Voldemort's competence at Dark magic, he disregards any other kinds of knowledge or magic that he doesn't think are useful or powerful. He thinks that love is silly, though he acknowledges that Lily's sacrifice to save Harry was important, and he abruptly ends his deep dive into wandlore in favor of acquiring the [Elder Wand](#), a powerful wand that he believes will overpower every other kind of magic. This ultimately proves an incorrect assumption, as Voldemort doesn't understand the rules guiding wands' loyalty and can't kill Harry with a wand that Harry is the true master of. Voldemort's final Killing Curse rebounds and kills him because of this.

Severus Snape – Formerly the Potionsmaster at Hogwarts; a greasy, cruel man who hates Harry in particular. Dumbledore trusted Snape, even though Snape was once a Death Eater, and Harry begins the novel believing that Dumbledore was wrong to trust Snape—Snape killed Dumbledore months before and reaffirmed his loyalty to Voldemort. Voldemort places Snape in charge of Hogwarts and, as far as Harry can tell, Snape allows horrific things to happen to students under his watch. Voldemort murders Snape during the final battle at Hogwarts, believing that Snape is the true master of the [Elder Wand](#) and thus needs to die in order for Voldemort to master the wand. Harry witnesses this, collects Snape's memories in the moments before Snape dies, and, in viewing them, learns the truth about Snape. Snape had been in love with Harry's mother Lily, since they were children who grew up near each other, and he got involved with the Death Eaters in his youth. However, when he discovered that Voldemort intended to kill Lily, he sought Dumbledore's help to protect her and agreed to help Dumbledore in return. Snape then became a double agent who was ultimately loyal to Dumbledore. Though Snape's hatred for Harry was genuine, he hated Harry mostly because Harry resembles James, with whom Snape had a long-running schoolboy feud. Snape agreed to kill Dumbledore and was aghast when Dumbledore finally revealed that Harry is a Horcrux and needs to die, though he is more upset because he still loves Lily than because he's come to care for Harry. Like Harry, Dumbledore kept Snape in the dark about a number of things throughout their partnership, but Snape continued to secretly implement Dumbledore's plan even after Dumbledore's death. Harry recognizes Snape's bravery and sacrifice by naming his middle son Albus Severus after both Dumbledore and Snape.

Albus Dumbledore – Harry's beloved former headmaster of Hogwarts; Snape murdered him a month or so before the novel begins. The Dumbledore that Harry knew seemed to have always been old, always on the side of good, and was decidedly

uninterested in seizing power, despite being one of the most powerful wizards of the age. Harry felt like he and Dumbledore were extremely close, as Dumbledore was both a mentor and a father figure to Harry. All this begins to break down, however, as Harry begins to learn about Dumbledore's early life, thanks to Rita Skeeter's hastily written biography of Dumbledore. Harry struggles with what to believe as he hears and reads that Dumbledore briefly plotted with the evil wizard Grindelwald to subjugate Muggles and that Dumbledore kept his younger Squib sister, Ariana, locked up, just like his mother Kendra did. Harry ultimately chooses to believe that Dumbledore had a plan, that he loved Harry, and that he did fight for good. The Dumbledore that Harry meets when Harry is dead, though he isn't real, suggests that Dumbledore was a far more nuanced character than either Harry or Rita Skeeter gave him credit for. The dream Dumbledore says that he did initially want to seize power for questionable reasons, but was unfit to do anything but possess the [Elder Wand](#) and use it for good. Harry is reminded that Dumbledore is both extremely intelligent and a meticulous planner; he planned Harry's entire life down to his self-sacrifice to Voldemort and gives Harry the information and the courage that Harry needs to go on and defeat Voldemort.

Draco Malfoy – Draco has been Harry's archenemy at Hogwarts since they met as first years. A small blond boy, Draco is in Slytherin House and his family openly supports Voldemort. Though Draco has parroted Voldemort's rhetoric about blood purity for years, his belief in those ideas and the evil required to support them has begun to fracture and Draco appears terrified of what he's gotten himself into. He dishonored his family months before the novel begins by failing to kill Dumbledore, so Draco is mostly intent on trying to survive. He's clearly fearful of Voldemort and seems horrified, especially when Voldemort coldly kills people Draco knows in front of him and even makes Draco help torture others. When Harry, Ron, and Hermione escape from Malfoy Manor, Harry Disarms Draco and steals his wand, effectively knocking Draco down yet another peg. Though Draco makes one final attempt to curry favor with Voldemort in the final battle, his cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, overpower him and Draco is compelled to ask Harry for help in order to survive the Fiendfyre. Draco does survive thanks to Harry, and his entire family seems simply grateful that they survived the ordeal. Years later, when Draco puts his young son on the Hogwarts Express, he acknowledges Harry, but it appears as though they never truly reconciled.

Bellatrix Lestrange – One of Voldemort's most devoted followers. She's a tall and imposing witch with long black hair, and she's one of the most evil Death Eaters: she's responsible for Sirius's death, as well as torturing Neville's parents to the point of insanity. Voldemort trusts her and so he asks her to keep one of his Horcruxes in her vault at Gringotts, although he never shares with her that Hufflepuff's cup is a Horcrux. However, Bellatrix finds herself in a difficult spot with

Voldemort because of her family connections: she's Tonks's aunt and, in addition to having a Muggle-born brother-in-law in Ted Tonks, Tonks's marriage to the werewolf Lupin means that Voldemort teases her mercilessly. She's obsessed with blood purity and does whatever she can to attempt to kill Tonks and Lupin. Bellatrix is cruel and has no problem torturing anyone who gets in her way. However, Harry is forced to understand that for all of Bellatrix's evil, she was kind to the house-elf Kreacher and was able to use his resulting loyalty to her advantage. Mrs. Weasley kills Bellatrix after Bellatrix attempts to kill Ginny, and she's Voldemort's last important follower to die.

Aberforth Dumbledore – Dumbledore's younger brother. They look much the same, but unlike Dumbledore, Aberforth never had a love for school and he's a relatively unambitious person. He and Dumbledore had an okay relationship as children, but their relationship soured after their mother, Kendra, died, and Dumbledore returned home to care for their younger and mentally ill sister, Ariana. Aberforth had a close relationship with Ariana and wanted to drop out of Hogwarts to care for her, but Dumbledore wouldn't let him. This resulted in a fight at Ariana's funeral in which Aberforth punched Dumbledore, breaking his nose. Aberforth remains extremely loyal to his family and to Ariana specifically throughout his life, and he expresses disdain and disapproval for Dumbledore. Harry realizes that he's the barman at the Hog's Head in Hogsmeade when the trio Apparate there in preparation to infiltrate Hogwarts. Aberforth shows Harry at that point that he cares much more about caring for those he loves than bigger-picture ideas, as he believes that it's futile to fight Dumbledore and thinks that he'll be safe working with the Death Eaters. He does, however, reveal that he's been helping Harry and is the owner of the blue eye Harry sees at several points in a mirror fragment.

Hagrid – The gamekeeper at Hogwarts. He's half giant and a member of the Order of the Phoenix. Hagrid and Harry have been close friends since Harry started at Hogwarts: Hagrid was the one tasked with introducing Harry to the magical world and after Voldemort murdered Harry's parents, Hagrid brought baby Harry to the Dursleys. Though Hagrid is unwaveringly loyal to Harry and to fighting Voldemort, he has several quirks that make fighting evil more difficult in practice. He was expelled from Hogwarts as a child but keeps his broken wand concealed in a pink umbrella; because of this, his magic is rudimentary at best and dangerous at worst. Hagrid also adores animals, especially if they're dangerous or misunderstood, which leads him to try to call the Order of the Phoenix off of killing the giant spiders that live in the Forbidden Forest and who joined Voldemort. Hagrid expresses his loyalty in ways that also undermine his intentions, as when he throws a "support Harry Potter" party at Hogwarts and goes on the run to escape Death Eaters. He fights in the final battle at

Hogwarts alongside his giant half-brother, Grawp, and is distraught when Voldemort forces him to carry Harry's body out of the Forbidden Forest.

Ariana Dumbledore – Dumbledore's youngest sister. Her existence is shrouded in mystery and rumor: many believe that she wasn't actually a witch and, to cover this up, her mother Kendra kept Ariana locked up like a prisoner until her own death, while Ariana died not long after at Dumbledore's hands. The truth, however, is even more tragic. Ariana was a witch but, when two Muggle boys found her and she wasn't able to perform magic for them, they abused her, possibly sexually, which permanently damaged her mind and caused her to repress her magical abilities. Kendra *did* keep her locked up, but only to keep Ariana from being forcefully placed in St. Mungo's, as Ariana's moods were unpredictable and when she became angry, her repressed magic made her dangerous. Ariana accidentally killed Kendra in one of her rages. Aberforth explains to Harry that he and Ariana were extremely close, while Dumbledore saw her as a burden. She died during a three-way duel between Dumbledore, Aberforth, and Grindelwald, and it's unknown whose spell actually killed her. Her portrait hangs in Aberforth's sitting room and she's able to bring people through a tunnel that leads to the Room of Requirement.

Remus Lupin – Formerly a Defense Against the Dark Arts professor at Hogwarts, where he formed a close bond with Harry that has continued in the years since. Lupin was a close friend of James Potter and of Sirius. A werewolf, Lupin looks far older and more tired than he should be for only being in his mid-thirties, as he struggles to find work and the strain of transforming every month takes its toll on his health. He marries Tonks not long before the novel begins, though his guilt over marrying Tonks and possibly conceiving a child affected with werewolfism rules his life in the months after he marries. He offers to help Harry, Ron, and Hermione and leave Tonks with her parents when Tonks reveals that she's pregnant. Lupin later insinuates that Harry was right to refuse his help and send him home. Though Lupin is a force for good, he understands that desperate times call for desperate measures and chastises Harry for not using more forceful or even deadly spells to protect himself. Lupin dies in the final battle at Hogwarts, though he returns in a ghost-like form to accompany Harry to meet Voldemort.

Kreacher – The elderly house-elf whom Harry inherited from Sirius when Sirius died. At first, Kreacher is a horrifying being: he's dirty, he's cruel, and he uses foul language and often insults "Mudbloods" like Hermione. Two years ago, when the Order of the Phoenix was cleaning out number twelve, Grimmauld Place to use as their headquarters, Kreacher built up his reputation as a pathetic attempted savior of Black family heirlooms. When Harry discovers that R.A.B. is Regulus Black, he forces Kreacher to tell him what happened to the locket Horcrux. He

discovers through this story that what Kreacher truly wants is to be recognized for his service and treated kindly, as Regulus treated him. Once Harry begins to show Kreacher this recognition, Kreacher completely transforms into a loyal and obedient servant. He captures Mundungus, who stole the locket; cleans himself up; and reveals himself to be a fantastic cook. Kreacher presumably keeps Harry's secrets and remains loyal even after Harry loses the ability to return to number twelve, Grimmauld Place safely. During the final battle, Kreacher arrives to rally the Hogwarts house-elves to Harry's cause.

Mrs. Weasley – The matriarch of the Weasley family. She's short, plump, and has red hair like all of her children. Mrs. Weasley cares deeply for her family members and for their safety in particular, which is why she often does whatever she can to keep her children from getting themselves into dangerous situations, whether that be keeping Ron from planning with Harry and Hermione to forbidding Ginny from joining in the final battle at Hogwarts. She has a temper when she gets angry and Fred and George are often the recipients of her ire, as they enjoy tormenting her. Mrs. Weasley is a skilled cook and an accomplished witch; she kills Bellatrix Lestrange during the final battle after Bellatrix makes the mistake of trying to kill Ginny. Though it makes Harry uncomfortable, Mrs. Weasley treats him like a surrogate son and even gives him her brother's watch for his seventeenth birthday, which is a Wizarding tradition, but one that Harry would otherwise be shut out of, as he has no parents to give him such a gift.

Dobby – A house-elf whom Harry freed from service to the Malfoys in his second year, and who has remained unwaveringly loyal to Harry and Harry's friends ever since. Unusually for a house-elf, Dobby loves freedom and is proud of wanting to be paid for his work. Though it isn't clear what Dobby has spent his year doing—he was formerly in paid service at Hogwarts—he's in contact with Aberforth Dumbledore, who sends Dobby to rescue Harry and his friends from Malfoy Manor. Dobby not only Apparates everyone out of the manor, but also drops a chandelier on his former masters and scolds Bellatrix Lestrange for trying to hurt his friends. Dobby dies when Bellatrix throws a knife at him while he's Apparating. Harry chooses to dig Dobby's grave by hand, believing that Dobby deserves the respect and loyalty shown to him in death that Dobby showed Harry in life. They bury Dobby in socks and hats, which he loved to collect.

Ginny Weasley – The youngest Weasley child. She and Harry had a brief romance at the end of last year, though Harry broke it off as to not put Ginny in danger when he decided to leave school and hunt for the Horcruxes. Despite being officially broken up, both of them still harbor feelings for each other, and Ginny orchestrates several moments prior to Bill and Fleur's wedding when they can be alone together. At Hogwarts, Ginny is active in Dumbledore's Army resistance efforts and gets into

a lot of trouble for her activism. She believes in fighting Voldemort in every way possible and resents that she's not yet of age and so she can't join the Order of the Phoenix and fight Voldemort properly. She takes issue especially with Mrs. Weasley, who often tries to keep Ginny from participating in anything remotely dangerous. As adults, Ginny and Harry get married and have three children.

Regulus Arcturus Black – Sirius's younger brother. As a young man he was extremely proud of who he was and of who his family was, and he joined the Death Eaters because he truly believed in the cause. Despite these questionable views, Kreacher explains that Regulus was extremely kind to him—though this assessment is complicated by the revelation that Regulus volunteered Kreacher to help Voldemort by testing the potion protecting his locket Horcrux, a potion that makes the drinker relive horrific events from their past. Regulus served Voldemort until he decided to work against Voldemort from within by stealing the locket. According to Sirius, Regulus got cold feet and tried to abandon the Death Eaters but, due to his lack of importance within the organization, he was killed by one of Voldemort's followers and not Voldemort himself. Voldemort presumably never discovers that Regulus was working against him.

Dolores Umbridge – Formerly a Hogwarts professor who, in the present, has aligned herself with Voldemort. Though Umbridge previously seemed to love power for power's sake more than she loved Voldemort's ideology, Voldemort does give her the opportunity to become powerful through exploiting and abusing those she hates and fears, such as Muggle-borns, half-blooded wizards, and other beings who aren't thought of as being entirely human, such as werewolves. Though she is a cruel and terrifying villain, her appearance and mannerisms paint an opposing picture: she's short, toad-like, and loves pink, bows, and garish kittens. Her voice is high and girlish, and her Patronus is a fluffy cat. Though Harry has always loathed her, he hates her even more when he discovers that she's using Mad-Eye Moody's magical eye to spy on underlings from her office at the Ministry.

Bathilda Bagshot – An elderly magic historian who lived in Godric's Hollow, along with the Dumbledore family and the Potters. She was a generation or so older than Dumbledore himself and sought to make friends with the Dumbledore family when they moved to town. Lily Potter also reveals in a letter to Sirius that she was in regular communication with Bagshot. Bagshot is best known for writing Harry's History of Magic textbook. In the weeks after Dumbledore's death, Rita Skeeter preyed on Bagshot's old age and failing mind to conduct invasive interviews on the Dumbledore family. Though Bagshot died sometime in the weeks following the book's publication, her death goes unremarked and unnoticed until after Christmas, when Harry and Hermione discover that Voldemort used her home and her body to lure Harry to him.

Gellert Grindelwald – An evil Eastern European wizard. He and Dumbledore met as young men, when Grindelwald visited Bathilda Bagshot in Godric's Hollow at the same time as Dumbledore was living there to care for Ariana. A brilliant wizard, he and Dumbledore became great friends and began to plot—though Grindelwald held troubling beliefs about the necessity of subjugating Muggles, which Dumbledore went along with. The men's friendship ended during a duel with Aberforth, when one of their spells hit Ariana and killed her. Grindelwald returned to his home country where he began his own reign of terror, which Dumbledore put a stop to with a famous duel in the 1940s. Later, Harry discovers that Grindelwald stole the [Elder Wand](#) from the wandmaker Gregorovitch, which is how the wand passed into Dumbledore's possession.

Lucius Malfoy – Draco's father. Though he began the series as a powerful and terrifying man, he's been increasingly dishonored at the start of the novel, and he is forced to allow Voldemort to use his house as a headquarters for the Death Eaters. Lucius is clearly not thrilled about this arrangement, but like his wife Narcissa, he seems more interested in doing whatever he needs to do to protect his family than in taking a stand either for or against Voldemort. Voldemort forces Lucius to lend him his wand and, when the wand explodes, it seems as though Voldemort doesn't bother to replace it, making Lucius even weaker. Lucius survives the final battle but continues to be more interested in insuring his family's safety than anything else.

Neville Longbottom – One of Harry's fellow Gryffindor students. He returned to Hogwarts at the beginning of the school year as, being a pureblooded wizard, he didn't have to fear for his life. At school, Neville bravely carried on with Dumbledore's Army and leads the student resistance movement until it becomes too dangerous to continue. He reconnects with Harry when Harry arrives in Aberforth's pub and learns that Neville and other resistance fighters have been hiding out in the Room of Requirement. Though Neville has always been a hopeless student and a poor wizard, he's extremely brave and having something to fight for helps Neville to come into himself. Harry tasks him with killing Nagini with Gryffindor's sword and Neville is able to carry this out spectacularly. In adulthood, Neville becomes a Hogwarts professor.

Xenophilius Lovegood – Luna Lovegood's father and the editor of *The Quibbler*, which formerly was a laughable magazine that ran articles about beasts that don't exist, but has become the only reliable source for information about Voldemort. He's tall and has long blond hair. Xenophilius attends Bill and Fleur's wedding wearing a mysterious symbol on his robes, and later the trio seeks him out for information on the symbol. Though he tells them the truth—that the symbol is the symbol for the Deathly Hallows—he also switched sides after the Death

Eaters kidnapped Luna. Like Luna, Xenophilius believes fully in creatures that don't exist and ignores Hermione's warning that the "Crumple-Horned Snorkack" horn in his home is actually a dangerous Erumpent horn.

Lily Potter – Harry's mother. She died at age twenty-one and sacrificed herself to protect baby Harry, giving Harry protection from Voldemort as long as Harry lives with Lily's sister, Petunia. Through old letters that Harry finds, he discovers that Lily was a bright and happy young woman, even when she was cooped up in hiding from Voldemort. From Snape's final memories, Harry gets insight into who Lily was as a child. Lily's parents were Muggles, and Snape introduced Lily to what she was and the Wizarding world. The two remained friends most of the way through school, and Lily acted as Snape's conscience as he began to spend time with students who would later become Death Eaters. Snape was secretly in love with Lily and loves her until he dies.

Wormtail – As a teenager, Wormtail—Peter Pettigrew—was best friends with James, Sirius, and Lupin, but as a young adult, he began working for Voldemort and ultimately gave away James and Lily's location to Voldemort. He's interested mostly in serving whoever is the most powerful, which is what led him to Voldemort in the first place. He possesses one silver hand, which Voldemort gave Wormtail to thank him for sacrificing his original hand to bring Voldemort back to life. He owes Harry a debt, since Harry refused to kill him years ago, and Wormtail is forced to pay this back when Harry reminds him of it. Wormtail's silver hand strangles him, showing Harry that Wormtail did feel some sense of remorse and had the capacity to show mercy.

Griphook – A goblin whom Dobby helps Harry rescue from Malfoy Manor and, in the first Harry Potter novel, the goblin who showed Harry to his vault at Gringotts. Griphook is a hard individual for Harry to read, as he's both impressed by how kindly Harry treats non-human individuals in the magical world, but also seems to detest Harry and wizards in general. Griphook agrees to help Harry, Ron, and Hermione break into the Lestranges' Gringotts vault in exchange for the sword of Gryffindor, which was made by a goblin. He does, however, remain suspicious of Harry and aloof as though he expects Harry to double-cross him—a fear that isn't unfounded. Griphook escapes with the sword as soon as he gets the trio into the vault.

Luna Lovegood – One of Harry, Ron, and Hermione's friends at Hogwarts. She's a year younger, with long blond hair and eyes that seem to stare uncomfortably. Luna has a reputation as a crazy believer of conspiracy theories and nonexistent creatures, but she's a loyal friend and, when she's focused, she's also a competent witch. She recognizes Harry at Bill and Fleur's wedding, even though he's in disguise, and seems to have a knack for knowing how people are feeling. Harry learns after visiting her father, Xenophilius, that the Death Eaters

kidnapped Luna off the Hogwarts Express when she was coming home for Christmas in the hopes of blackmailing her father. Harry and Dobby rescue Luna from Malfoy Manor.

Rufus Scrimgeour – The Minister of Magic at the beginning of the novel. Scrimgeour is a rough and imposing man who has never gotten along well with Harry, and this continues as Scrimgeour is forced to distribute the contents of Dumbledore's will to Harry, Ron, and Hermione. Though Scrimgeour says he wants to work with Harry and wants to know what Harry was planning with Dumbledore, Harry refuses on the grounds that Scrimgeour seems far more interested in turning up dirt on Dumbledore than he is in doing something effective to stand up to Voldemort. Despite this accusation, Scrimgeour is rumored to have been killed after refusing to give up Harry's location to the Death Eaters.

George Weasley – One of the Weasley twins, who are two years older than Ron. Both Fred and George act and think very much alike, and they use the fact that they're identical in most ways to torment Mrs. Weasley and other adults. The twins give up their jobs as joke shop owners in order to fight Voldemort as part of the resistance movement. George is one of the first people injured; during Harry's flight from the Dursleys', Snape curses off one of George's ears. True to form, George makes a joke about it as soon as he's reunited with Fred, though Fred insists that the joke isn't very good. George is distraught when Fred dies.

Ollivander – An elderly and acclaimed wandmaker; he used to have a shop in Diagon Alley and he made most British wizards' wands. He has a piercing stare and Harry often feels uncomfortable around him. Voldemort captures Ollivander over the summer, hoping to use his extensive knowledge of wandlore to give him the information he needs to defeat Harry. Though Ollivander tells Voldemort what he knows when Voldemort tortures him, the twin cores of Harry and Voldemort's wands are so rare that his information ends up being incorrect. He forms a close bond with Luna when both he and Luna are imprisoned at Malfoy Manor, and Dobby saves Ollivander when he arrives to rescue Harry.

Fred Weasley – One of the Weasley twins, who are two years older than Ron. Both Fred and George act and think very much alike, and they use the fact that they're identical in most ways to torment Mrs. Weasley and other adults. The twins appear to give up their jobs as the owners of their joke shop in order to be a part of the resistance movement and fight Voldemort. Fred is one of the hosts of *Potterwatch*, where he uses his joking nature to poke fun at the Death Eaters and spread information about Voldemort. Fred dies suddenly and shockingly early on in the final battle at Hogwarts.

Percy Weasley – One of Ron's older brothers. Two years ago, Percy took his love of rules, regulations, and order to the extreme by pledging his allegiance to the Ministry and

disowning his family. When Harry sees him at the Ministry when the trio sneaks in, Percy appears to still fully believe in his actions. Right before the final battle, however, Percy arrives and explains that he regrets his actions and has been trying to figure out a safe way to get out of the Ministry for a while. He fights valiantly in the battle and helps Harry move Fred's body after Fred dies.

Phineas Nigellus – A former Hogwarts headmaster who was widely disliked, and the last headmaster from Slytherin until Snape takes over the position at the beginning of the novel. Though long dead, Nigellus still exists in his portraits, which hang in the headmaster's office at Hogwarts and in a bedroom at number twelve Grimmauld Place. He's a snide, self-important person, and Hermione steals his portrait from number twelve so that Snape can't use Phineas to spy on them. This later turns out to be exactly what Snape hoped for: Phineas is able to pass information about the trio's whereabouts to Snape so that Snape can help them and pass them the sword of Gryffindor.

Sirius Black – Harry's beloved godfather. He died two years ago and left Harry his house, number twelve Grimmauld Place, and the house-elf Kreacher, as well. Sirius was a fun-loving man and a protective godfather, though his reach was limited, as he spent his life imprisoned and then on the run for a crime he didn't commit. Sirius was also derisive of Kreacher and treated him poorly when he was alive. He died protecting Harry. Harry brings a version of Sirius back when he walks to his death and in that incarnation, Sirius looks younger and happier than Harry has ever seen him.

Mad-Eye Moody – A retired Auror and a member of the Order of the Phoenix. He's missing an eye and replaced it with a bright blue enchanted one that can spin in all directions and see through everything, even solid surfaces and Invisibility Cloaks. He's a gruff and scowling person who openly distrusts everyone, hence his catchphrase, "constant vigilance." He dies while the Order moves Harry to the Burrow, and Death Eaters steal his enchanted eye. Harry takes it from Dolores Umbridge when he infiltrates the Ministry and buries it in the forest. It's all that anyone can find of Moody's body.

The Gray Lady – Helena Ravenclaw was Rowena Ravenclaw's daughter. She was a greedy and selfish young woman, which led her to steal her mother's enchanted diadem. She hid it in a forest in Albania while trying to escape her suitor, who killed her and then himself. They became the Gray Lady (the ghost of Ravenclaw House), and the Bloody Baron, respectively. As the Gray Lady, Helena is quiet and struggles to deal with the shame she feels for stealing her mother's diadem in the first place, as well as the shame of having given its location away to Voldemort.

Mr. Weasley – Ron's dad and a Ministry employee in the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts office. A lanky, redheaded man, he must carefully balance his love for his family and his desire to

protect them with his involvement in the Order of the Phoenix. He fully supports Harry's journey to look for Horcruxes, though he doesn't know exactly what the quest entails, and he shows Ron that he trusts him to make his own choices by helping to transform the Weasleys' ghoul into "Ron" with spattergroit, a deadly, disgusting, and extremely contagious illness as a cover for Ron's absence.

Bill Weasley – One of Ron's older brothers. A few months before the start of the novel, the werewolf Fenrir Greyback mauled Bill. Though Bill isn't a werewolf, he has some wolfish tendencies and his face is severely scarred. He marries Fleur over the summer and, after their wedding, the couple retreat to Shell Cottage on the coast, which they run as a safe house. A former treasure hunter for Gringotts, Bill cautions Harry about working with goblins and introduces him to some of the ways in which goblins see the world differently from wizards.

Elphias Doge – An elderly man and a contemporary of Dumbledore's. He and Dumbledore were best friends in their youth and remained good friends throughout their lives, and Doge writes a touching obituary for Dumbledore that runs in the *Daily Prophet*. Though Doge insists that Dumbledore was a good man through and through, Harry finds him hard to believe when he struggles to refute any of Auntie Muriel's gossipy assertions about Dumbledore at Bill and Fleur's wedding. For her part, Rita Skeeter suggests that Doge isn't entirely sane when she challenges his critiques of her biography of Dumbledore.

Narcissa Malfoy – Draco Malfoy's mother. She's pale and blond, like Draco and Lucius, and it becomes clear early on that while Narcissa may believe that Voldemort has the right idea when it comes to blood purity and his vision for the world, she's more interested in protecting her family than in sacrificing anyone she loves for Voldemort's vision. She's afraid of Voldemort and likely doesn't care whether Harry is alive or dead, but she chooses to announce that Harry is dead—thereby protecting him—so that she can enter Hogwarts and find Draco.

James Potter – Harry's father. Though James was a self-important and pompous young person, he grew up to be a beloved resistance fighter and sacrificed himself trying to protect Lily and baby Harry from Voldemort. His last living best friend (who isn't working for Voldemort, as Wormtail is), Lupin, offers Harry insight into the kind of loyal and trusting person that James was. Harry uses the Resurrection Stone to conjure James and Lily to walk him to his sacrifice to Voldemort.

Rita Skeeter – A nasty sensationalist journalist who, a mere four weeks after Dumbledore's death, publishes her 900-page biography on him. Skeeter openly butted heads with Dumbledore in life, and the biography contains a number of "dirty secrets" about the Dumbledore family that may or may not be true. Skeeter is known for her questionable reporting

techniques and tactics. She uses a Quick-Quotes Quill, which embellishes what people say in interviews, and insinuates that she took advantage of Bathilda Bagshot's age and failing mind when she interviewed her for the book.

Tonks – A young Auror and member of the Order of the Phoenix. She and Lupin marry not long before the novel starts. Tonks is bright and bubbly and though she's a very competent witch, she's extremely clumsy and is known for knocking things over. She becomes pregnant not long after getting married and gives birth in the spring to a boy named Teddy, who is a Metamorphmagus like she is (which means they can change their appearance at will). Tonks and Lupin die in the final battle at Hogwarts.

Crabbe – One of Draco Malfoy's henchmen. Crabbe thrives in the environment at Hogwarts during his seventh year, as he gets to hone his cruel nature to torture other students as part of his classwork. He speaks to Harry for the first time when Harry discovers him in the Room of Requirement. He conjures what Harry later discovers was Fiendfyre, extremely dangerous fire that contains horrific and hungry beasts, but he doesn't have the skills to put the fire out and dies in the inferno.

Mundungus Fletcher – Though Mundungus is a member of the Order of the Phoenix, he's not especially brave or even all that committed to the cause—he's better known as a thief and a cheat, but he was brought into the Order because of his knowledge of other criminals. He is easily manipulated and is also extremely cowardly: Mundungus panics during the move and Disapparates, leading to Mad-Eye Moody's death.

Albert Runcorn – The Ministry employee whom Harry impersonates when the trio infiltrates the Ministry of Magic. They know nothing about him when they pull him off the street, but it soon becomes clear that Runcorn is a feared and high-level supporter of Voldemort, though not a Death Eater. Though Harry has no idea how much power Runcorn actually has at the Ministry, he's able to use Runcorn's power to help all the Muggle-borns awaiting trial escape.

Viktor Krum – Krum is an internationally acclaimed Quidditch player for the Bulgarian team; he attends Bill and Fleur's wedding. He's somewhat duck-footed and awkward, with a hooked nose that, in Ron and Harry's opinion, makes him not particularly handsome. He briefly dated Hermione, which makes Ron dislike him intensely. At the wedding, Krum picks a fight with Xenophilius Lovegood for wearing what he insists is Grindelwald's symbol of evil.

Kingsley Shacklebolt – A member of the Order of the Phoenix. He has a calming demeanor and can properly dress like a Muggle, which surprisingly earns him the respect of the Dursleys. Though he begins the novel by keeping watch on the Muggle Prime Minister, he eventually has to go into hiding after the Ministry of Magic falls. He fights in the final battle at Hogwarts.

Reg Cattermole – A Magical Maintenance employee at the Ministry of Magic, whom Ron impersonates using Polyjuice Potion in order to infiltrate the Ministry. Reg appears to be on the side of good, given that none of the known Death Eaters or supporters are nice to him. On the day that the trio sneak in, Reg's wife is scheduled to go on trial for being Muggle-born.

Kendra Dumbledore – Dumbledore's mother. She was a tall and austere woman who, by most accounts, ruled over her family with an iron fist. It's unclear if she was actually cruel or just afraid of losing her mentally ill daughter, Ariana, to St. Mungo's, but she was cold to her neighbors and many accuse her of keeping Ariana like a prisoner. Ariana kills Kendra by accident.

Professor McGonagall – The Transfiguration professor at Hogwarts and the Head of Gryffindor House. She remains at Hogwarts to teach and protect students even though the school falls under Voldemort's control. Though she's surprised to see Harry show up at Hogwarts, she immediately jumps to his aid, demonstrating her loyalty to Dumbledore and her belief in the importance of fighting for what's right.

Fleur Delacour – Bill Weasley's French and part-Veela wife; the two marry early in the novel. Fleur is extremely beautiful and charming, all thanks to her Veela blood, but she's also kind and dedicated to the resistance movement. She has no issue housing the trio, as well as Ollivander, Luna, and Griphook, when they show up on her doorstep at Shell Cottage.

Fenrir Greyback – A greasy, nasty werewolf who aligns himself with Voldemort in exchange for victims. Though he runs with the Death Eaters, Greyback isn't officially one of them and doesn't have the Dark Mark. He's cruel and the pleasure he takes in his victims themselves—both young men and young women—reads as sexually predatory.

Dudley Dursley – Harry's cousin. He's blond and hulking, and he and Harry have never had a good relationship—Dudley loved watching his parents abuse Harry throughout their childhood. However, Dudley shows that he has begun to change his conception of Harry when he expresses concern for Harry's safety, leaves Harry tea, and shakes Harry's hand before he goes into hiding.

Auntie Muriel – The Weasley children's 107-year-old great-aunt. She's widely disliked as she's loud, obnoxious, and a gossip. Though it's implied that she's on the side of good, she also expresses clear disdain for Dumbledore—though this could also be the product of her Rita Skeeter-esque love of gossip, since Dumbledore's past is sordid and interesting.

Neville's Gran – Neville's elderly grandmother; a self-sufficient, snappy, and loyal woman. She seems finally proud of Neville, now that he's bravely standing up to the people who tortured Neville's parents. An accomplished witch in her own right, Neville's gran goes on the run when Death Eaters attempt to hold her hostage to force Neville into submission.

Aunt Petunia – Harry's maternal aunt. She's an unpleasant woman and doesn't like Harry, but she and Vernon agree to take Harry in because her sister and Harry's mother, Lily, sacrificed herself for Harry, which gives Harry protection if he lives with Petunia. Harry later learns that Petunia wanted to attend Hogwarts as a child.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Percival Dumbledore – Dumbledore's father. He was imprisoned in Azkaban when Dumbledore was a child for brutally attacking two Muggle boys, something that most people attributed to shocking anti-Muggle beliefs. However, Aberforth later explains that Percival didn't actually just hate Muggles: the boys tormented and abused his young daughter Ariana.

Uncle Vernon – Harry's large, cantankerous, and cruel uncle. He both loathes and fears magic and magical people, and he hates Harry especially. However, he does agree to go into hiding from Voldemort when Dudley insists that he's going. Vernon cannot bring himself to shake Harry's hand.

Lee Jordan – Fred and George's best friend and classmate. As an adult, Lee helps the resistance movement by hosting and producing the radio show *Potterwatch*, which seeks to provide serious news as well as humorous political commentary to resistance fighters.

Teddy Lupin – Remus Lupin and Tonks's son. He's born in the early spring and is a Metamorphmagus, like Tonks. Harry is Teddy's godfather, though it's never stated who goes on to raise him after his parents die in the final battle at Hogwarts.

Travers – A Death Eater whom Hermione, in disguise as Bellatrix Lestrange, runs into on her way to break into Gringotts. Travers is fooled by Hermione's acting, though Harry does place him under the Imperius Curse once they get into the bank.

Mafalda Hopkirk – A small and mousy witch whom Hermione impersonates using Polyjuice Potion when the trio infiltrate the Ministry. They know little about who Mafalda is, but her job is secretarial in nature.

Seamus Finnigan – One of Harry's fellow Gryffindor students who went into hiding in the Room of Requirement. A member of Dumbledore's Army, he stays to fight in the final battle.

Professor Sprout – The head of Hufflepuff House and the Herbology professor at Hogwarts. She doesn't hesitate to mobilize against Voldemort and gathers various nefarious or dangerous plants to use as weapons.

Professor Flitwick – The Charms professor and the head of Ravenclaw House at Hogwarts. He's a tiny man, loyal to Dumbledore, and is thrilled to be able to stand up to Voldemort.

Pius Thicknesse – The Head of the Department of Magical Law

Enforcement, whom the Death Eaters place under the Imperius Curse. After the fall of the Ministry, Thicknesse then becomes the acting Minister of Magic.

The Bloody Baron – The ghost of Slytherin House. In life, he loved Helena Ravenclaw and sought to marry her, but he killed her and then himself when she refused. He wears shackles in his ghostly form in order to atone for this.

Albus Severus Potter – Harry and Ginny's younger son and middle child. He's a quieter and more anxious boy, and is the only child who inherited Harry's green eyes. Albus is extremely concerned about being sorted into Slytherin.

Grawp – Hagrid's sixteen-foot-tall, giant half-brother. Though massive to Harry, Grawp is a small giant. He fights bravely and loyally on Hagrid's behalf, but struggles to emerge victorious because of his size.

Goyle – One of Draco Malfoy's cronies. His seventh is presumably his best year at Hogwarts, as Voldemort's control of the school means that Goyle is able to draw on his cruel nature to torture other students.

Dean Thomas – One of Harry's fellow Gryffindor students who, because he's Muggle-born, spends his year on the run. He receives word of the coming battle at Hogwarts, however, and shows up to help Dumbledore's Army.

Horace Slughorn – The Potionsmaster at Hogwarts. Though not an evil man, Slughorn is cowardly and considers not fighting in the final battle, though he does end up staying to fight.

Stan Shunpike – Stan was formerly the conductor of the Knight Bus. While it's likely that Stan is under the Imperius Curse during the novel, he is a member of the Death Eaters and is involved in the attack on the seven Harrys.

Alecto Carrow – An evil Death Eater who takes over the Muggle Studies position at Hogwarts following Voldemort's takeover of the school. She works closely with her brother, Amycus.

Amycus Carrow – An evil Death Eater who becomes the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher at Hogwarts after Voldemort takes over the school. He teaches students to perform the Cruciatus Curse on students who earn detention.

Dirk Cresswell – A wizard whom Albert Runcorn tried to put in Azkaban by exposing that Dirk faked his family tree to make him look pureblooded. He escapes and goes on the run with Ted Tonks, Dean, Griphook, and Gornuk.

Ted Tonks – Tonks's father; a jovial and round man. He goes on the run once Voldemort requires that all Muggle-born wizards register and dies at the hands of Death Eaters. Lupin and Tonks name their son after Ted.

Mrs. Tonks – Tonks's mother. She's a pureblooded witch and looks much like Bellatrix Lestrange, her sister.

Dedalus Diggle – A good-natured member of the Order of the

Phoenix jointly in charge of hiding the Dursley family from Voldemort.

Hestia Jones – A member of the Order of the Phoenix tasked with hiding the Dursley family from Voldemort.

Gregorovitch – An Eastern European wandmaker. Though he once possessed the [Elder Wand](#), Grindelwald stole it from him when he was a young man.

Mrs. Cattermole – Reg Cattermole's wife. She's Muggle-born and Harry and Hermione witness her trial with Dolores Umbridge.

Bogrod – A goblin who works at Gringotts. Harry uses the Imperius Curse to force Bogrod to help the trio infiltrate Gringotts.

Nagini – Voldemort's giant and extremely poisonous snake. She's his closest companion and is also a Horcrux. Neville kills her using the sword of Gryffindor.

Rowena Ravenclaw – The founder of Ravenclaw House. She created a diadem which her daughter, who later became the Gray Lady, stole from her.

Pansy Parkinson – A Slytherin student and one of Harry's peers. She suggests giving Harry over to Voldemort.

Gornuk – A goblin on the run with Dean, Ted Tonks, Dirk Cresswell, and fellow goblin Griphook.

Hedwig – Harry's beloved snowy owl. She dies while Harry is traveling away from Petunia and Vernon's house.

Professor Trelawney – The Hogwarts Divination professor who joins the final battle by throwing crystal balls at Death Eaters.

Colin Creevy – A younger classmate of Harry's who sneaks back to Hogwarts and joins the fight against Voldemort. He dies.

Charity Burbage – Formerly the Muggle Studies professor at Hogwarts. Voldemort murders her.

Dawlish – An Auror who later, under the influence of the Imperius Curse, works for the Death Eaters.

Charlie Weasley – One of Ron's older brothers. He studies dragons in Romania and is closely involved with the resistance effort against Voldemort.

James Potter Jr. – Harry and Ginny's oldest son. He's self-important, confident, and enjoys picking on his little brother.

Victoire – Presumably the daughter of Bill and Fleur. She's romantically involved with Teddy Lupin.

Nearly Headless Nick – The Gryffindor House ghost.

Yaxley – A hulking blond Death Eater.

Dolohov – A Death Eater.

Rose – Ron and Hermione's daughter.

Hugo – Ron and Hermione's son.

Fang – Hagrid's boarhound.

Madame Delacour – Fleur's mother.

Monsieur Delacour – Fleur's father.

Gabrielle Delacour – Fleur's younger sister.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



CHOICES, REDEMPTION, AND MORALITY

For the seventh and final installment of the Harry Potter series, Harry, Hermione, and Ron—all now adults in the Wizarding world—set off on their own to follow through with the mission that Dumbledore gave Harry: to discover and destroy Voldemort's Horcruxes (bits of his soul contained in physical objects) and, in doing so, to destroy Voldemort himself. At the heart of the story is a question that the series has already spent a lot of time exploring: what makes a person good or evil? As an adult, Harry begins to truly understand that people aren't born good or evil, though the particulars of one's upbringing can certainly help sway a person one way or the other. Instead, the true marker of either good or evil is what choices a person makes—and by introducing this element of choice, the novel also leaves room for morally ambiguous characters to redeem themselves.

The idea that good and evil are choices and not innate states of being is one that Harry has grappled with time and again as he's grown up and come of age in the Wizarding world. Despite this, Harry still struggles to understand how this applies to both people he loves and those he unabashedly hates. This rises to the forefront at Bill and Fleur's wedding, when Harry finds himself in the middle of a heated argument between Elphias Doge, a friend of Dumbledore's, and Auntie Muriel, the Weasleys' gossip-loving old aunt. It's important to keep in mind that, for Harry, drawing out any possible nuance in Dumbledore's character is complicated by the fact that Harry idolized Dumbledore. Dumbledore was a combination of a father figure, mentor, and co-conspirator to Harry, and the Dumbledore that Harry knew was unfailingly selfless, kind, and worked tirelessly on behalf of minorities and other marginalized communities in the Wizarding world. Because of this, it's a nasty shock for Harry when he hears that Dumbledore was possibly to blame for his own sister's death and even briefly flirted with evil as a young man by becoming friends with the evil wizard Grindelwald and plotting to subjugate Muggles. A major part of Harry's development

happens as he struggles to reconcile these wildly different sides of Dumbledore. Harry must try to hold two possible truths about Dumbledore—that he was a good and kind person, and that he made horrific mistakes and held unjustifiable views as a young man—in his mind at the same time, and he must decide whether or not he can forgive Dumbledore for this misstep.

The questions of Dumbledore's ambiguous morality plague Harry throughout the novel, but as he, Ron, and Hermione journey through the countryside in search of Horcruxes, Harry is offered a variety of opportunities to see the same questions of moral ambiguity play out. From Kreacher, the house-elf that Harry grudgingly inherited (and whom Harry has detested since meeting him two years ago), Harry discovers that Sirius's younger brother, Regulus, wasn't the brainwashed, Voldemort-loving Dark wizard that Sirius made him out to be. While it's true that Regulus joined the Death Eaters because he initially believed in their mission, Harry also discovers that Regulus was kind and gentle toward Kreacher, and that he died after secretly working to take down Voldemort by stealing one of the Horcruxes. Kreacher's story adds nuance and depth to all the people he mentions, not least himself—it turns out that Kreacher wasn't an evil, spiteful creature; all he wanted was kindness, attention, and thanks. Getting recognition from Harry sways Kreacher's loyalty from dangerous Dark wizards like the Malfoys and Bellatrix Lestrange—who did treat him kindly—and means that Kreacher even shows up to rally the house-elves in the final battle at Hogwarts on Harry's behalf. Through the characters of Kreacher and Regulus, Harry is introduced to the idea that there are wizards working for Voldemort who do get cold feet and later fight for good, while also reminding Harry that even his beloved godfather, Sirius, wasn't faultless—in life, he was cruel and dismissive of Kreacher.

Later, Ron, disillusioned with Harry and their quest, leaves Harry and Hermione in a fit of rage for the comfort of a warm bed and hot meals. Though Harry's close relationship with Ron gives him the willingness to understand that Ron's bad decision doesn't make him a bad person, Ron importantly still feels horrible and spends a great deal of time trying to make up for his misstep—showing that it falls as much to the person who made the mistake to atone for their misdeeds as it does to others to forgive them. All of this primes Harry to eventually decide that, for the purposes of his quest, it's far more important to focus on and fight for Dumbledore's better qualities, while also learning from Dumbledore's mistakes that it's possible for people to change for the better. This allows Harry to accept help from former enemies like Narcissa Malfoy and even to forgive his longtime enemy, Severus Snape—who, Harry discovers, spent his entire adult life trying desperately to atone for his misdeeds.

The novel's final suggestion that good, evil, and the possibility

for redemption are choices that anyone can make is clearer nowhere than at the culmination of the final battle, when Harry gives Voldemort the choice to repent. That Voldemort chooses not to, and that Voldemort's final killing curse rebounds and kills him instead of Harry, forms a poignant and cautionary tale. Anyone, the novel suggests, can atone for their bad choices by choosing to feel compassion and work for others, while doubling down on one's cruel and heartless beliefs will only bring worse outcomes—and giving someone the opportunity to make this decision, as Harry does, is one of the kindest things a person can do for another.



GRIEF AND COMING OF AGE

More so than any of the previous installments of the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is intensely focused on death, especially in

terms of how the living coexist with and make sense of their memories of the dead. For Harry, who is still reeling after the death of Dumbledore at the end of the series' previous installment, coming to terms with who Dumbledore was in life is Harry's final step to maturity and into the adult world. In this way, while the novel makes it clear that coming to terms with a deceased loved one's legacy is a difficult proposition for everyone, it's particularly difficult and transformative for young people.

Harry's struggle to comprehend Dumbledore's death and to fully accept it is compounded by the fact that, at several points throughout the novel, Harry believes he sees Dumbledore's piercing blue eye looking at him through a two-way mirror fragment given to him by Sirius. To Harry (and, at points, to Ron as well), this suggests that maybe Dumbledore isn't actually dead—something that, within the logic of a magical world in which many unthinkable things are possible, isn't entirely illogical. Though Harry does seem to understand on some level that Dumbledore is truly dead, this issue of acceptance is magnified again when Harry learns about the Deathly Hallows and, specifically, about the Resurrection Stone—which purportedly has the power to bring people back from the dead, albeit in a form that's not fully human. Of the three Hallows, this is the object that Harry covets the most: the number of people close to him that he's lost and the amount of grief that he's experienced in seventeen years of life means that he often finds himself longing for the company of the deceased. For Harry, then, much of his coming of age over the course of the novel happens as he gradually learns that the dead should indeed stay dead, and that dwelling on the dead inevitably leads to forgetting or neglecting the business of living.

Harry begins to make these leaps as he sees increasingly that seeking out the dead isn't actually guaranteed to give him a sense of companionship and belonging, something that he's spent his life craving after being orphaned as a toddler. More alone in the world than ever, Harry spends the first several

months of his, Ron, and Hermione's journey fixated on visiting Godric's Hollow, where Harry was born and where his parents are buried—and, as it turns out, where Dumbledore's family also lived. Though Harry expects to discover a sense that he belongs in Godric's Hollow, or simply to find answers about his family or about Dumbledore, his experience there is more unfulfilling than not. Finding his parents' graves is meaningful and emotional, but one of the only things of note that Harry and Hermione pick up there is a copy of Rita Skeeter's sensationalist biography of Dumbledore.

Harry, who has been dealing with Rita Skeeter's questionable reporting for years at this point, understands that he can't take everything she writes as fact, especially when her subject is someone like Dumbledore, with whom she openly butted heads. However, Skeeter's reporting, combined with Harry's growing doubts and questions about Dumbledore, make Harry feel even more insecure about his relationship with his former headmaster. In the six years that Harry knew Dumbledore, Dumbledore never shared that they had this shared connection to Godric's Hollow and, therefore, never confirmed or denied any of the allegations of what happened there—which in turn, leaves Harry unsure of what to believe and whether he should still believe in Dumbledore's mission.

Dobby's tragic and untimely death begins to put in perspective for Harry that the dead can only provide so many answers. Harry sees the blue eye in the mirror before Dobby arrives (and therefore concludes that Dumbledore somehow must have sent Dobby), and he chooses to read this as proof that Dumbledore knew what he was doing and did care for Harry—even though there's no proof that Dumbledore was behind it and, indeed, even though Harry discovers that Dumbledore's brother Aberforth actually sent Dobby. This represents a major transformation in the way that Harry thinks about his relationships to the dead. By choosing to reapply himself to his quest and, by extension, to all of the good things that Dumbledore stood for, Harry effectively begins to control how he interprets the narrative of Dumbledore's life. Put another way, Harry stops fixating on Dumbledore the person and instead focuses on how he can best honor Dumbledore's memory through his actions.

However, this doesn't mean that Harry doesn't still crave a final conversation with Dumbledore, hence Harry's imagined conversation with his headmaster while Harry is effectively dead. It's important that the Dumbledore Harry speaks to is a creation of Harry's mind, not a return of the man himself. In this dreamlike state, Harry is able to orchestrate a final advice-giving conversation with his mentor—though again, all that he learns are things that he subconsciously knew, but needed the nudge of a mentor to fully grasp. Through Harry's conversation with this Dumbledore, Harry is able to come to terms with Dumbledore's legacy, while his choice to return to the land of the living signifies his final shift from child to adult—and his

choice to continue to fight for the positive aspects of Dumbledore's legacy. That Harry, almost two decades in the future, endeavors to impart wisdom that Dumbledore once gave him to his son suggests that the best way to honor a person's legacy is by doing exactly this.



KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

Since Voldemort's return to his body three years ago, Harry, Ron, and Hermione have gradually been forced to learn that an effective resistance

movement is less about showy acts of heroism and more about sustained labor, planning, and the acquisition or protection of valuable information. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* takes this idea to its final conclusion: though Harry and his friends do engage in several heroic acts, and though the climax of the novel is a bloody and exciting battle, what Harry spends most of the novel doing—and what allows him to win the final battle—is the information he spends the year acquiring. With this, the novel makes the case that knowledge truly is power, and that devaluing information and learning can have disastrous consequences.

Particularly through Harry's private lessons with Dumbledore last year, Harry began to learn the value of acquiring as much information as possible. Those lessons concerned picking apart Voldemort and Tom Riddle's tragic history in an attempt to better understand the man behind the villain, a quest that Harry and his friends must continue as they leave Hogwarts and go on the run with the goal of tracking down and destroying Voldemort's remaining Horcruxes, objects containing parts of his split soul. With this to guide them, Harry, Ron, and Hermione set out on an undercover quest to obtain as much information as possible, both about the remaining Horcruxes and about Voldemort's whereabouts and activities. Initially, this proves surprisingly unchallenging. Acquiring information from Kreacher gives Harry the intelligence he needs to track down the next Horcrux—a Slytherin locket—infiltrate the Ministry of Magic, and steal it from Dolores Umbridge.

Also at first, Harry ascertains through his mental connection with Voldemort that it seems as though his adversary is on a similar quest to discover important information about wands and wandlore, or the theory of how exactly wands function as they do. This suggests that, at least on some level, Voldemort understands the power of relying on information to inform how he uses his power and doles out violence. However, Harry learns later that Voldemort suffers from significant gaps in how he understands the information he has, which makes him prioritize information that is ultimately less important and devalue a number of things that could've been extremely helpful.

Harry comes to recognize that, though Voldemort makes attempts to learn the theories behind wandlore and the power

of blood sacrifices, Voldemort ultimately resorts to brute strength when it proves too difficult and unfruitful to continue pursuing knowledge. This power grab is represented by Voldemort's choice to break into Dumbledore's tomb and steal the [Elder Wand](#). The Elder Wand is supposedly the most powerful wand in the world and can win any duel, no matter what—a proposition that's unsurprisingly attractive to someone like Voldemort, who hasn't been able to thwart Harry by any other means. Harnessing the wand's power, however, isn't as easy as just grabbing it and using it; wandlore is, unfortunately for Voldemort, far more complicated than that. During Harry's final dreamlike conversation with a version of Dumbledore, Harry fills out his understanding of how wands change masters and, ultimately, discovers who the true master of the Elder Wand is: Harry himself. That Voldemort doubles down on his belief that the all-powerful Elder Wand will bring him victory, even when Harry shares this information with him, makes it abundantly clear how little Voldemort thinks of information that doesn't serve him. Harry, on the other hand, is able to use this information to trust that responding to Voldemort's final killing curse with literally any other spell will most likely save him, given that the Elder Wand probably won't kill its own master—and he's right.

Though the conflict between Harry and Voldemort concerning the Elder Wand offers a neat example of the relationship between knowledge and power, it's worth noting that, as a series centered on a school, this relationship is one that shines through all the books in the Harry Potter series. Now an adult (and in that sense, an outsider at Hogwarts), Harry is able to truly see that whoever controls Hogwarts also gets to control Wizarding society more broadly. In other words, controlling the one site at which young people are educated gives a person or group the power to dictate the entire cultural narrative—whether that be championing kindness and camaraderie like Dumbledore did, or blood purity and fear like Snape does under Voldemort's watch—all by choosing what, how, and from whom students learn.

Voldemort indicates that he recognizes this when he first takes over Hogwarts, though it becomes even more apparent during the final battle when he attempts to burn the [Sorting Hat](#). Had Voldemort emerged victorious (declaring that there would be no more Sorting at Hogwarts and that Slytherin House would be the only house), he could have fundamentally shaped society by impressing upon Hogwarts pupils the importance of physical might over intellectual curiosity, and by devaluing or cutting those subjects that he deems useless, such as wandlore or history. In a broader sense, the novel then stands as a call to arms for readers to stand up for varied and diverse education and to remember that many things, from children's stories to the personal accounts of marginalized individuals, have value and are worthy of study.



MORTALITY AND SACRIFICE

The final installment of the Harry Potter series is filled with death. A number of favorite characters meet their end in this novel, including Harry

himself—though Harry's return to life raises even more questions about what death truly means, particularly in terms of Dark magic and sacrifice. By looking at how people consider death and, specifically, how and when people fear death, the novel suggests that it's futile to fear it—and that through accepting one's mortality, a person can not only find more meaning in their own life, but also improve the lives of others.

Throughout the series, Dumbledore has made it clear to Harry that Voldemort fears death more than anything else and to a greater degree than almost any other person. This is why Voldemort set about learning the Dark magic necessary to split his soul into seven parts and encase these parts in objects; according to the theory behind the magic, this means that Voldemort cannot truly die until all of the Horcruxes are also destroyed. However, the novel is quick to show that there's a great deal of danger involved with splitting one's soul, as well as an extremely high cost: creating a Horcrux requires killing another person, something that the novel suggests deprives a person of their humanity and makes them less than human. In other words, to become effectively immortal through Horcruxes is to become something other than human—which Voldemort, who is snakelike and impossibly, inhumanly cruel—demonstrates in the extreme.

While the theory behind the Horcruxes draws out one reasonably effective (if horrific) way to achieve immortality, the novel overwhelmingly makes the case that seeking immortality is a fool's errand, even if technically, it can be done. It does this most poignantly through its exploration of the Deathly Hallows, three objects that, together, allow a person to "cheat death." "The Tale of the Three Brothers," a story in the children's book *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, tells of three brothers who met a version of Death at a bridge and who accepted three gifts from Death: a wand more powerful than any other; a stone capable of bringing back the dead; and a true invisibility cloak with which to hide from Death. The story then shows how the wand and the stone prove deadly and unsatisfying when used for selfish means, while the brother who asked for the cloak simply uses it to hide until he's ready to die—and then passes it on to his child and greets Death happily. As a relatively simple morality tale, "The Tale of the Three Brothers" makes the case that immortality isn't a valid goal at all—rather, a better goal when it comes to death is to die on one's own terms, leaving loved ones with the tools and the wisdom to eventually do the same.

Harry sees, again and again, that the third brother in the story was the only one with the right idea—though within the context of the full-on war taking place in the Wizarding world, this sometimes means that dying on one's own terms entails

sacrificing oneself for the cause, not dying a peaceful death in old age. The Auror Mad-Eye Moody, for example, is one of the first members of the Order of the Phoenix to die. While Moody certainly didn't want to die, he died doing what he believed in and standing up for the greater good.

Thanks to the memories that Snape gives to Harry in the moments before he dies, Harry discovers that all of what he's seen and, particularly, all of the clues that Dumbledore left for him in terms of what it means to die have huge consequences for Harry: Harry himself is the final Horcrux, and so in order to defeat Voldemort, he must allow Voldemort to kill him. In doing this, Harry must become the exact opposite of Voldemort in that he willingly accepts his death, knowing that dying will save the rest of humanity—while Voldemort wants to use his immortality to subjugate all of humanity.

What Harry learns in the brief, dream-like time in which he's dead is that he was successfully able to complete this task because of his compassion, his goodness, and his ability to love—in other words, all the things that make him human. Greeting death as the third brother did means that Harry also gets the opportunity to choose to continue living and, in doing so, finish his quest and do away with Voldemort and his dangerous ideas about immortality for good. Through Harry's sacrifices and the sacrifices of others, Rowling makes it clear that dying is an essential, intrinsic part of being human. For Harry, sacrificing himself is what turns him into a being that is truly human and, for the first time in sixteen years, truly himself, separate from Voldemort—something that, in turn, will allow Harry to eventually greet death again, on his own terms, as a truly mortal man.



FRIENDSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND RESISTANCE

The Wizarding world that Harry and the reader return to at the start of the novel is in a state of panic: the Order of the Phoenix believes (correctly) that the Death Eaters have infiltrated the Ministry. This situation means that most people feel unable to trust each other or their government—something that, in previous installments, Dumbledore has suggested is actually a help to Voldemort, who thrives on fear and suspicion. In this landscape, Harry must lean on Ron, Hermione, and the Wizarding world at large more than ever, and the novel suggests that building community and connection is one of the most effective ways to mount a resistance movement.

Harry struggles with needing friends and help to complete his quest—his friends and the Order of the Phoenix make several jokes at Harry's expense about his unwillingness to accept help, especially when accepting help means allowing other people to put themselves in danger. Thus, accepting help from friends is one of the final things that Harry must learn before he can truly

come of age. Though Harry's friends lovingly mock him for his independence, it's important to keep in mind that Harry wants to act alone in part because he does care so much for those he loves. Especially since he knows that his parents, Sirius, and Dumbledore all died to protect him, he's understandably hesitant to involve others when he knows that there's danger involved. However, Hermione and Ron are insistent that they're going to accompany Harry—and it doesn't take long for Harry to feel extremely grateful for his friends' company and the different skills they bring to the table. This is Harry's first real revelation: first, that in order to be a good friend himself, it's important to respect the autonomy of others and honor their decisions; then, that having his friends—especially Hermione—around to help with the planning and execution allows him to accomplish far more than Harry ever would've been able to by himself.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione soon discover, however, that it's a lot to ask of each other to be the only people they ever see or hear from, which is their state of affairs once they head out on the run—and especially once they obtain the locket Horcrux, which they wear for safekeeping but which makes the wearer unusually irritable and negative. At the same time, as the trio descends into bickering and pointless argument (a consequence in part of their isolation), Harry also notices that it seems as though their goal is increasingly less attainable. This sense increases after Ron, hungry and disillusioned, leaves Harry and Hermione for Bill and Fleur's cottage. The novel makes it clear that, while Ron's choice to leave was made in poor judgment, more important than the fact that he left was that he came back. With this, it suggests that the measure of a friendship's success is not necessarily whether it remains good and healthy at all times, but that friends are able to practice forgiveness and accept each other back into their lives after lapses like this.

Importantly, Ron's return doesn't just bring Ron himself back to his friends: he brings news of the outside world and introduces Harry and Hermione to *Potterwatch*, a password-protected radio program put out by Harry's allies in the resistance movement. Though Harry and those behind *Potterwatch* have certainly been on the same side the whole time, it's extremely gratifying for Harry to hear his friends' voices and have it affirmed that he's not the only person fighting Voldemort. In this way, while Ron and Hermione remain Harry's best friends and the only people Harry fully lets in on his quest, Harry begins to see the necessity of including others if he wishes to finish what he started and defeat Voldemort.

Harry is finally able to put this into practice when he returns to Hogwarts to find the final Horcrux, destroy the Horcrux he already has, and, hopefully, destroy Voldemort, as well. Though Harry once again refuses the help of many members of Dumbledore's Army who have gone into hiding in the Room of Requirement, when it becomes clear that a full-on battle is

brewing and that he needs all the help he can get to fortify Hogwarts, Harry finally begins to understand the power of his community. Even though Harry doesn't share with anyone why exactly he's searching for the lost diadem that belonged to Rowena Ravenclaw, it's telling that all of his friends either offer to help him find it or throw themselves into preparing the castle for the battle to come—a necessity if Harry hopes to be successful and buy himself time to find the diadem in the first place. Because of the friendships that Harry formed with his classmates and teachers over the years, they trust him when he says he needs to perform this task—and having him around helps several former acquaintances, such as Professor Slughorn, reaffirm their commitment to the resistance movement and to Harry himself.

The final battle is, consequentially, a group effort mounted by the many people over the years who have come to love, appreciate, and trust Harry. In other words, the ensuing victory isn't something that Harry could've done alone. While killing Voldemort was certainly the most important part, that doesn't discount the fact that others dealt with Voldemort's closest followers and, in the case of Ron and Hermione, figured out how to do away with the Horcrux by getting into the Chamber of Secrets and using a basilisk fang.

In a more overarching way, Harry's victory is a testament to the power of friendship, not least because Voldemort's defeat will, in theory, usher in a new era of tolerance, kindness, and a crackdown on the kind of extremism that allowed Voldemort to rise to power in the first place. With this, the novel proposes that friendship can not just move mountains and make amazing things happen; very simply, fighting for friendship means that it will be possible for others in the future to learn the same positive lessons about friendship that Harry did.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in [blue text](#) throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



THE ELDER WAND

The Elder Wand—one of the three objects that make up the Deathly Hallows and, in theory, allows a person to "cheat death"—is supposedly the most powerful wand in the world. While the other two Hallows (the invisibility cloak and the resurrection stone) are widely considered to be legends, it's possible to trace the Elder Wand through history—as its presence is often marked by bloody duels and changes of power. Its reputation is why Voldemort chooses to break into Dumbledore's tomb and steal the wand; he believes that possessing this wand will be a guaranteed way to best Harry. However, wandlore is more complicated than this: simply possessing the wand doesn't guarantee that a person

will be successful with it. This suggests that there's more to winning than simply having the best wand. With this, the Elder Wand—and indeed, Voldemort's new Ministry slogan, "Magic is Might"—come to represent how limited and incomplete Voldemort's view of power and success is, as the wand is useless without a firm understanding of the theory to back it up.



THE SORTING HAT

Very simply, the Sorting Hat—the old hat that once belonged to Godric Gryffindor that has sorted Hogwarts pupils into different Houses since the school's founding—represents Hogwarts itself, and specifically, the ideal of the diverse school that Dumbledore promoted. The act of sorting students into four different houses suggests that the founders valued difference and diversity, and they recognized that making space for all types of students would be the best way to create a welcoming environment and most effectively educate students. Voldemort, on the other hand, sees diversity as a threat to the monolithic and pureblooded society he wants to create. For him, then, destroying the Sorting Hat itself is the easiest way to destroy Dumbledore's vision of Hogwarts and replace it with his own.

sadly feels as though he didn't know Dumbledore well at all. In this moment, Harry is forced to uncomfortably confront his own youth and the narrow-mindedness that comes with that—in that for Harry, whose relationship with Dumbledore always centered around Dumbledore helping Harry to grow up, Harry must recognize that there was more to Dumbledore than just what was useful or necessary to him. What Harry is essentially mourning here is that he didn't come of age before Dumbledore died and because of that, was never in a place to think beyond the Dumbledore that he knew to all of the other roles that Dumbledore certainly played throughout his long life.

Chapter Three Quotes

●● He looked curiously at his cousin. They had had virtually no contact during this summer or last, as Harry had come back to Privet Drive so briefly and kept to his room so much. It now dawned on Harry, however, that the cup of cold tea on which he had trodden that morning might not have been a booby trap at all.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Dudley Dursley

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

When Dudley insists that Harry isn't a "waste of space," Harry is shocked and begins to realize that there might be more to Dudley than he's given him credit for in the past. In particular, it's important that Harry toys around with possibly reframing the cup of tea he found outside his room earlier. By recognizing it as a possible olive branch, or offering of peace, from Dudley, Harry is able to create room for Dudley to redeem himself and be recognized for that.

That Dudley is finally beginning to acknowledge and appreciate Harry exemplifies the novel's suggestion that anyone is capable of changing for the better, given that Dudley has, thus far, been one of Harry's biggest and most constant enemies throughout the series. Because Harry is willing to consider that Dudley might be changing, this suggests that Harry himself will also be able to draw on people he hadn't previously considered for help or assistance.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scholastic Inc. edition of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* published in 2007.

Chapter Two Quotes

●● He had thought he knew Dumbledore quite well, but ever since reading this obituary he had been forced to recognize that he had barely known him at all. Never once had he imagined Dumbledore's childhood or youth; it was as though he had sprung into being as Harry had known him, venerable and silver-haired and old. The idea of a teenage Dumbledore was simply odd, like trying to imagine a stupid Hermione or a friendly Blast-Ended Skrewt.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Albus Dumbledore, Elphias Doge

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 21

Explanation and Analysis

After reading Elphias Doge's obituary for Dumbledore in the *Daily Prophet*, which details Dumbledore's youth, Harry

Chapter Five Quotes

☞ "Harry, the time for Disarming is past! These people are trying to capture and kill you! At least Stun if you aren't prepared to kill!"

"We were hundreds of feet up! Stan's not himself, and if I Stunned him and he'd fallen, he'd have died the same as if I'd used Avada Kedavra!"

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Remus Lupin (speaker), Stan Shunpike

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 70

Explanation and Analysis

As people begin to converge at the Burrow and as Lupin learns what happened between Harry and Stan, he scolds Harry for relying on non-violent defensive spells instead of going for more meaningful and possibly deadly force. While it's important to keep in mind that Lupin has a point here—Harry is in grave danger of being killed by the Death Eaters—Harry's choice to not use deadly spells is, in his mind, one of the things that sets him apart from Voldemort. This again brings around the idea that the marker of whether a person is good or evil isn't some innate quality; it's the choices that a person makes, like this one, that either help others or hurt others. Lupin's scolding, meanwhile, makes space for the possibility that even among the "good guys," there's still a capacity for those "good" people to hold uncharitable views towards others.

☞ Dumbledore would have believed him, he knew it.
Dumbledore would have known how and why Harry's wand had acted independently, because Dumbledore always had the answers; he had known about wands, had explained to Harry the strange connection that existed between his wand and Voldemort's...But Dumbledore, like Mad-Eye, like Sirius, like his parents, like his poor owl, all were gone where Harry could never talk to them again.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Sirius Black, Mad-Eye Moody, Stan Shunpike, Hedwig

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 84

Explanation and Analysis

When several members of the Order gently remind Harry

that wands don't act of their own accord—which Harry's did during his airborne duel with Voldemort—Harry feels more alone and misunderstood than ever. Harry's specific lament that Dumbledore knew everything but isn't here to share his wisdom sets up one of Harry's journeys as he continues to come of age: he needs to learn how to acquire knowledge and put it to use himself, not just rely on others to mediate his experiences. The grief that Harry feels also reminds the reader that as Harry comes of age, a major piece of this process will come together as Harry continues to deal with this grief and this sense of being wholly alone in the world. Harry will, in other words, have to learn how to stand on his own two feet and how to make sense of the world around him, just like Dumbledore did—something that in the future, Harry will then be able to pass on to others.

Chapter Seven Quotes

☞ "It's traditional to give a wizard a watch when he comes of age," said Mrs. Weasley, watching him anxiously from beside the cooker. "I'm afraid that one isn't new like Ron's, it was actually my brother Fabian's and he wasn't terribly careful with his possessions, it's a bit dented on the back, but—"

Related Characters: Mrs. Weasley (speaker), Harry Potter

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 114

Explanation and Analysis

Mrs. Weasley gives Harry a watch for his seventeenth birthday, something that touches Harry. This passage suggests that there's more to coming of age in the Wizarding world than just being able to do magic without supervision. While for other wizards the watch might simply symbolize having reached this milestone, for Harry, receiving the watch that once belonged to Mrs. Weasley's brother shows him that coming of age means that he's also becoming a true member of the Weasley family, one who is able to receive family heirlooms. Further, Mrs. Weasley's willingness to give this gift to Harry shows her stepping even more fully into a parent role for him, given that this is a tradition that, Harry, as an orphan, might not have been able to participate in otherwise. Taken together, receiving this watch shows Harry not just coming of age on his own, but truly taking his place in Wizarding society and as a member of the Weasley family.

Chapter Eight Quotes

☞☞ Harry looked into Doge's earnest, pained face and felt, not reassured, but frustrated. Did Doge really think it was that easy, that Harry could simply *choose* not to believe? Didn't Doge understand Harry's need to be sure, to know *everything*?

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Elphias Doge, Rita Skeeter

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 152-53

Explanation and Analysis

At the wedding, Harry asks Elphias Doge about Rita Skeeter's accusations that Dumbledore's past was sordid and sketchy, and Doge encourages Harry to simply not believe what she writes. The fact that Harry struggles so immensely to do this, and that he desperately wants to know the truth about Dumbledore, speaks to his youth and immaturity when it comes to engaging with Dumbledore's legacy. Harry wants something that, importantly, isn't something he can receive—Dumbledore is dead and can't give Harry the truth, and it's also worth keeping in mind that even if Dumbledore had decided to talk about his past with Harry, Dumbledore's account would still have only told one version of what actually happened. Thus, as Harry struggles to make sense of who Dumbledore was as a young man and integrate what he learns into what he knew of Dumbledore as an old man, he must learn to focus on what he learned from Dumbledore, rather than searching for a truth that, at this point, is impossible to discover.

Chapter Ten Quotes

☞☞ The accusations he had heard from Muriel at the wedding seemed to have nested in his brain like diseased things, infecting his memories of the wizard he had idolized. Could Dumbledore have let such things happen? Had he been like Dudley, content to watch neglect and abuse as long as it did not affect him? Could he have turned his back on a sister who was being imprisoned and hidden?

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Ariana Dumbledore, Elphias Doge, Rita Skeeter, Dudley Dursley, Auntie Muriel

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 177

Explanation and Analysis

The morning after the wedding, Harry thinks back over Auntie Muriel's accusations that Dumbledore's sister, Ariana, was a Squib, and that he allowed their mother to keep her imprisoned to save them from public shame. The possibility that Dumbledore was willing to stand for this cruelty shakes Harry to the core, as it undermines everything he thought he knew about Dumbledore. The Dumbledore that Harry knew fought tirelessly on behalf of minorities and individuals who had less power in society, like Squibs. The fact that Harry is so upset about the possibility that Dumbledore wasn't as good and perfect as he always thought shows just how alone Harry feels in the world. He feels alone enough that he's willing to seriously consider that Rita Skeeter, whom he knows firsthand to be an unreliable reporter, might have the right idea—he's so alone, in other words, that his ability to think critically is suffering.

☞☞ "Elf magic isn't like wizard's magic, is it?" said Ron. "I mean, they can Apparate and Disapparate in and out of Hogwarts when we can't."

There was silence as Harry digested this. How could Voldemort have made such a mistake? But even as he thought this, Hermione spoke, and her voice was icy.

"Of course, Voldemort would have considered the ways of house-elves far beneath his notice, just like all the purebloods who treat them like animals...It would never have occurred to him that they might have magic that he didn't."

Related Characters: Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger (speaker), Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Kreacher

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 195

Explanation and Analysis

Harry, Hermione, and Ron consider that the magic that house-elves have is different from their own, and is what allowed Kreacher to escape from a lake of Inferi (zombies) in the cave where Voldemort kept a Horcrux. This is the reader's first introduction to the fact that if an area of study doesn't interest Voldemort or seem powerful to him, he'll almost always disregard it. Because Voldemort's ideal worldview relies so fully on the idea that wizards and wizards' magic is the most powerful magic, it's unthinkable to him that other beings' magic is capable of performing tasks that wizards' magic cannot. This begins to explain why

Voldemort didn't understand the power of Lily Potter's sacrifice for Harry, for example, and why Harry has thus far been able to escape him thanks to his reliance on his friends.

☞ "Sirius was horrible to Kreacher, Harry, and it's no good looking like that, you know it's true. Kreacher had been alone for a long time when Sirius came to live here, and he was probably starving for a bit of affection. I'm sure 'Miss Cissy' and 'Miss Bella' were perfectly lovely to Kreacher when he turned up, so he did them a favor and told them everything they wanted to know. I've said all along that wizards would pay for how they treat house-elves. Well, Voldemort did...and so did Sirius."

Related Characters: Hermione Granger (speaker), Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Bellatrix Lestrange, Kreacher, Sirius Black, Narcissa Malfoy

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 198

Explanation and Analysis

After Kreacher's tragic tale of Regulus's death, Hermione tells Harry that house-elves are loyal to people who are kind to them, which Sirius wasn't to Kreacher. This revelation continues to flesh out the novel's insistences that people aren't entirely good or bad, and that a person becomes good or bad because of the choices they make. "Miss Cissy" and "Miss Bella" here refer to Narcissa Malfoy and Bellatrix Lestrange, two women that, up to this point, Harry has thought of as being entirely evil—and yet, both of them clearly understood that being kind to a house-elf like Kreacher would help them in the long run. That they have the capacity for kindness, even though they ultimately used it for evil, indicates that they have the ability to choose to be kind. This later becomes an important thing for Harry to remember, as he ultimately does discover that Narcissa isn't entirely evil: she's loyal to her family first and foremost, and doesn't care who wins the war as long as her family is safe.

Sirius, on the other hand, is someone whom Harry thought of as being unwaveringly good, and yet, he treated Kreacher horribly. Understanding that Sirius made a mistake and that he had the capacity to behave in a cruel and unfeeling manner to someone significantly less powerful impresses upon Harry the importance of honoring those who have less power and those whose loyalties can be swayed with kindness.

Chapter Eleven Quotes

☞ "Attendance is now compulsory for every young witch and wizard," he replied. "That was announced yesterday. It's a change, because it was never obligatory before. [...] This way, Voldemort will have the whole Wizarding population under his eye from a young age."

Related Characters: Remus Lupin (speaker), Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 210

Explanation and Analysis

When Lupin visits Grimmauld Place to see the trio, he explains that Voldemort has just made attendance at Hogwarts mandatory for all children who can prove that their parents are wizards. What Voldemort realizes is that by seizing control over the youth population, he's going to be able to carefully control what kind of adults those children grow up to be—and with him in charge, this means that they'll likely learn to be cold and unfeeling like him. With this, Voldemort shows that controlling the education system is one of the most effective ways to control the population at large, ultimately making it so that he can create the kind of society he'd like to see without having to do the more difficult work of bringing adults to his side—it's much easier to corrupt children.

Chapter Fifteen Quotes

☞ The rain was pounding the tent, tears were pouring down Hermione's face, and the excitement of a few minutes before had vanished as if it had never been, a short-lived firework that had flared and died, leaving everything dark, wet, and cold. The sword of Gryffindor was hidden they knew not where, and they were three teenagers in a tent whose only achievement was not, yet, to be dead.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 308

Explanation and Analysis

When Ron nastily brings Hermione and Harry back to earth after they realize that Dumbledore intended them to use the sword of Gryffindor on Horcruxes, they realize how

alone and vulnerable they are in the world. This becomes a major coming of age moment for all three of them. Ron leaves minutes after this, which impresses upon all of them the difficulty of following through on a mission that is, at this point, guided primarily by their faith in Dumbledore—a faith that is quickly eroding as it becomes clear that their journey is far more difficult than they ever imagined it would be. Harry and Hermione, on the other hand, have to process the new knowledge that Ron isn't always an unwaveringly loyal and trustworthy person. Instead, he's even more disenchanted with the lack of concrete information than Harry is.

It's also worth keeping in mind that at this point, the trio hasn't had contact with the outside world in weeks. This isolation is part of what leads Ron to decide to leave; it's impossible and unhealthy for them to be the only people they ever see. Though Ron's absence is difficult and damaging for all of them, it ultimately impresses upon them that they have to rely on their wider community if they expect to complete their journey.

he was able to do in part because he didn't have to attend to the real work of making sure he had a place to stay and food to eat. This desire, in this sense, represents Harry's discomfort with his adult status and speaks to Harry's sense of being alone and unmoored in the adult world.

☞ "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death!..." A horrible thought came to him, and with it a kind of panic. "Isn't that a Death Eater idea? Why is that there?"

"It doesn't mean defeating death in the way the Death Eaters mean it, Harry," said Hermione, her voice gentle. "It means...you know...living beyond death. Living after death."

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger (speaker), Lily Potter, James Potter

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 328

Explanation and Analysis

Harry is distraught to see what he believes is a Death Eater idea written on his parents' headstone, while Hermione insists that there's more to just living after death than the horrendous ideal of immortality as put forward by Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Importantly, the phrase on the headstone and Hermione's interpretation of it becomes extremely important later, when Harry sacrifices himself to Voldemort. It's possible to read the phrase as referring to the fact that people, Harry included, think of death as an enemy—something that Harry must rethink as he prepares to sacrifice himself. He decides that death is instead something good and something to be embraced, as dying is the only way that he can save the rest of humanity. In a sense, this speaks to the way that the novel conceptualizes all sacrifice, including Lily's. It turns death into something positive, as it allows another person to continue living.

Chapter Sixteen Quotes

☞ Indeed, as Phineas Nigellus talked about Snape's crackdown, Harry experienced a split second of madness when he imagined simply going back to school to join the destabilization of Snape's regime: being fed, and having a soft bed, and other people being in charge, seemed the most wonderful prospect in the world at that moment.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Severus Snape, Phineas Nigellus

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 314-15

Explanation and Analysis

In Ron's absence, Hermione begins pulling out Phineas's portrait to have someone else to talk to, and Phineas talks a lot about the resistance effort to Snape and Voldemort's regime. That Hermione brings out the portrait is an important indicator that it's impossible for two people to expect to be their only contacts—they need more people in order to healthily be able to live with each other, let alone accomplish their quest.

Harry's desire to return to Hogwarts is, at its heart, a desire to return to childhood. At Hogwarts, Harry was able to carry out all sorts of resistance efforts over the years, which

Chapter Eighteen Quotes

☞ Dumbledore had left them to grope in the darkness, to wrestle with unknown and undreamed-of terrors, alone and unaided: nothing was explained, nothing was given freely, they had no sword, and now, Harry had no wand. And he had dropped the photograph of the thief, and it would surely be easy now for Voldemort to find out who he was...Voldemort had all the information now...

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Albus

Dumbledore , Gellert Grindelwald

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 351

Explanation and Analysis

Following Harry and Hermione's disastrous visit to Godric's Hollow, Harry helplessly feels as though Dumbledore left them in the dark, and that Voldemort now has all the information he needs to accomplish his goals. This sense of being alone is entirely understandable; Harry was suddenly catapulted into an adult role as soon as Dumbledore died months before, and Dumbledore wasn't able to pass on everything that he needed Harry to know before he died. In this moment, Harry feels as though he's entirely lost his community and that he can't even trust his mentor figure to have set things up for him in a way that made sense. This low point, however, primes Harry to later accept help from others, and to continue to seek and turn over the things that Dumbledore did leave him.

suspicion that Dumbledore didn't leave him enough information. Instead, by putting Dumbledore's beliefs to good work, Harry is able to begin to come to terms with the mentor he knew, and pay forward the things that he learned—something, the novel suggests, that is one of the best ways to engage with a deceased person's legacy.

Chapter Twenty Quotes

☞ Ron looked a little embarrassed, but said in a low voice, "Dumbledore...the doe? I mean," Ron was watching Harry out of the corners of his eyes, "he had the real sword last, didn't he?"

Harry did not laugh at Ron, because he understood too well the longing behind the question. The idea that Dumbledore had managed to come back to them, that he was watching over them, would have been inexpressibly comforting. He shook his head.

Related Characters: Ron Weasley (speaker), Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 390

Explanation and Analysis

The day after Ron returns to Harry and Hermione, Ron questions whether Dumbledore might be secretly alive and watching over them. Harry's choice to disagree, even though believing that Dumbledore is alive would be extremely comforting, represents a major coming of age moment for Harry. In this moment, Harry begins to choose to believe that the dead should (and do) stay dead, and that continuing to interrogate people who can't answer for impossible bits of information is a useless task. Instead, Harry now recognizes that it's most important to look forward to what he has to do, and to understand that he will need to act alone, without Dumbledore's help, in order to accomplish his task. He can do so by choosing to engage with the things that Dumbledore taught him, rather than fixating on all the things that Dumbledore neglected to share.

☞ "Sometimes I've thought, when I've been a bit hacked off, he was having a laugh or—or he just wanted to make it more difficult. But I don't think so, not anymore. He knew what he was doing when he gave me the Deluminator, didn't he?" He—well, [...] he must've known I'd run out on you."

"No," Harry corrected him. "He must've known you'd always want to come back."

Chapter Nineteen Quotes

☞ He was not being kind or generous. As certainly as he had known that the doe was benign, he knew that Ron had to be the one to wield the sword. Dumbledore had at least taught Harry something about certain kinds of magic, of the incalculable power of certain acts.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Albus Dumbledore

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 373-74

Explanation and Analysis

When Ron returns and he and Harry find themselves with the sword of Gryffindor and the Horcrux locket in the same place, Harry insists that Ron should be the one to destroy the Horcrux. While allowing Ron to perform this task is something that, importantly, will allow Ron to feel more appreciated and necessary in the long run, it's most important that Harry finds himself using what he learned from Dumbledore to make this decision. With this, Harry begins to engage with Dumbledore's legacy in a more useful way by applying the things he knew Dumbledore stood for and believed in to the events that Harry himself experiences. In this moment, Harry isn't caught up worrying about whether or not Dumbledore loved him, or the

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley (speaker), Albus Dumbledore

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 391

Explanation and Analysis

Following his return, Ron suggests that Dumbledore showed excellent foresight by leaving him the Deluminator, and suggests that Dumbledore must've known more than just this one thing. This moment then shows all the members of the trio reaffirming their faith in Dumbledore and choosing to accept his role as their mentor, even though he's dead. Ron now understands that Dumbledore did prepare them for this quest, just in ways that they can't always foresee.

Harry's choice to correct Ron's word choice shows that he's now truly a believer that a person becomes good or bad through the choices they make. He chooses to focus on the fact that Ron chose to return, not that Ron chose to leave in the first place, which in turn allows him to see that Ron is a good person capable of making good choices.

Chapter Twenty-Eight Quotes

☞ He did not want to express the doubts and uncertainties about Dumbledore that had riddled him for months now. He had made his choice while he dug Dobby's grave, he had decided to continue along the winding, dangerous path indicated for him by Albus Dumbledore, to accept that he had not been told everything that he wanted to know, but simply to trust. He had no desire to doubt again; he did not want to hear anything that would deflect him from his purpose.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Aberforth Dumbledore, Dobby

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 563

Explanation and Analysis

When Aberforth questions Harry's commitment to the quest that Dumbledore set out for Harry, Harry chooses instead to dedicate himself to what he knows he has to do, not what Dumbledore didn't tell him. With this, Harry makes the final leap as he learns how to deal with Dumbledore's legacy, as he chooses to take the positive parts of Dumbledore's legacy when they're useful. However, even more important than this choice is Harry's

knowledge now that what's more important than learning to live with who Dumbledore was is dedicating himself to his task and to saving the world for everyone to come. Essentially, Harry recognizes that it doesn't really matter if Dumbledore betrayed him or didn't give him enough information. Instead, it's essential to let that be in the past and dedicate himself to fighting Voldemort—a threat that remains, no matter what Dumbledore did or didn't do.

Chapter Twenty-Nine Quotes

☞ "You didn't hear her," said Neville. "You wouldn't have stood it either. The thing is, it helps when people stand up to them, it gives everyone hope. I used to notice that when you did it, Harry."

Related Characters: Neville Longbottom (speaker), Harry Potter, Alecto Carrow

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 574

Explanation and Analysis

Neville recounts how he stood up to Alecto Carrow in class when she insisted that Muggles are animals, and shares that he learned the importance of standing up to things like this from Harry. In this moment, Harry is able to see that to some people, he occupies an almost Dumbledore-like status as a mentor and an example of what's good and what's right. With this, Harry can continue to make peace with what he knew and didn't know about Dumbledore, and focus on the fact that he can still make a difference by paying forward the things he learned from Dumbledore to inspire those around him.

☞ Dumbledore had warned him against telling anyone but Ron and Hermione about the Horcruxes. *Secrets and lies, that's how we grew up, and Albus...he was a natural...Was he turning into Dumbledore, keeping his secrets clutched to his chest, afraid to trust? But Dumbledore had trusted Snape, and where had that led? To murder at the top of the highest tower...* "All right," he said quietly to the other two.

Related Characters: Harry Potter (speaker), Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Severus Snape, Albus Dumbledore, Aberforth Dumbledore

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 583

Explanation and Analysis

Harry deliberates about whether or not to allow the members of Dumbledore's Army to help him look for the final Horcrux and ultimately decides to accept help. Harry's thought process shows him continuing to make peace with what he's learned about Dumbledore and to come to his own conclusions about the information he's gathered. Though Harry recognizes that Dumbledore had the right idea in lots of places, he also understands that as he continues to come of age and think about how to win this final battle, he also needs to make his own choices. The choice to involve Dumbledore's Army and accept help shows that Harry has finally learned that he can't do things alone. Even though Harry chooses to not involve them fully in his search for the diadem, he recognizes that it will be impossible for him to go forward by himself—and that only by involving others can he truly be successful.

possibly because of his House and the people he was surrounded with there, he has also made choices to remedy this—choices that, as far as Dumbledore is concerned, would make Snape more of a Gryffindor (a House known for its courage) than a Slytherin.

Chapter Thirty-Four Quotes

☞ And Dumbledore had known that Harry would not duck out, that he would keep going to the end, even though it was *his* end, because he had taken trouble to get to know him, hadn't he? Dumbledore knew, as Voldemort knew, that Harry would not let anyone else die for him now that he had discovered it was in his power to stop it.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Albus Dumbledore

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 693

Explanation and Analysis

Following the revelation that Harry is the final Horcrux and must die, Harry realizes that Dumbledore knew what he was doing and orchestrated everything perfectly as to kill as few people as possible. With this, Harry recognizes that Dumbledore hasn't groomed him to be a victorious hero; instead, Dumbledore spent six years training him to sacrifice himself willingly. Over the years, Dumbledore has made sure to praise Harry for his desire to protect others, a tendency that Harry must engage with fully in order to sacrifice himself to Voldemort. That Harry isn't especially upset about this speaks to the degree to which he understands the necessity of following through with his mission. Because Harry can't fathom sacrificing others so he can survive, he's able to fully accept his role as the martyr and savior and know that by allowing himself to die, he, like Dumbledore, will be able to make the world a better place for others going forward.

Chapter Thirty-Three Quotes

☞ "And are you tempted to join him?"

"No," said Snape, his black eyes on Fleur and Roger's retreating figures. "I am not such a coward."

"No," agreed Dumbledore. "You are a braver man by far than Igor Karkaroff. You know, I sometimes think we Sort too soon..."

Related Characters: Severus Snape, Albus Dumbledore (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 680

Explanation and Analysis

While viewing Snape's memories in the Pensieve, Harry watches Snape and Dumbledore discuss that Snape's Dark Mark is growing darker, and Dumbledore implies that Snape possibly shouldn't have been in Slytherin. This conversation is taking place during the Yule Ball during Harry's fourth year. Dumbledore's suggestion that Snape should've been sorted elsewhere continues to add to the novel's exploration of how choices make a person either good or evil. Dumbledore seems aware that Snape's status as a Slytherin made certain things more likely about him from the start—Harry learned in previous novels that all Dark wizards to come out of the UK were in Slytherin House, and he's seen little evidence to contradict this. Dumbledore, however, recognizes that though Snape has dallied with evil,

Chapter Thirty-Five Quotes

☞ "And his knowledge remained woefully incomplete, Harry! That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children's tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands nothing. *Nothing*. That they all have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped."

Related Characters: Albus Dumbledore (speaker), Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 709-10

Explanation and Analysis

During Harry's final, dream-like conversation with Dumbledore, Dumbledore makes it clear to Harry that Voldemort lacks important information simply because he arrogantly doesn't believe it's important. With this, the novel makes the case that there's something to learn from almost anything or anyone, whether that be children's stories, like *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, or creatures that might seem humble and unassuming, like house-elves. Dumbledore suggests, essentially, that Harry has been successful exactly because he's made the choice to engage with these different sources and ways of knowing, something that Voldemort has neglected to do. While Voldemort seeks brute strength in the form of the Elder Wand, Harry seeks knowledge—and that knowledge is, in the end, what allows Harry to triumph.

“So Voldemort, instead of asking himself what quality it was in you that had made your wand so strong, what gift you possessed that he did not, naturally set out to find the one wand that, they said, would beat any other. For him, the Elder Wand has become an obsession to rival his obsession with you. He believes that the Elder Wand removes his last weakness and makes him truly invincible.”

Related Characters: Albus Dumbledore (speaker), Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 721

Explanation and Analysis

In Harry's final conversation with Dumbledore, Dumbledore explains how Voldemort dedicated himself to

finding an unbeatable wand rather than looking for the knowledge that would tell him how to beat Harry. This, in Dumbledore's understanding, is why Voldemort won't emerge victorious: he believes that he can stomp all over magical theory with a powerful wand, not understanding that the magical theory he so despises governs the way that the Elder Wand works, the same as it governs everything else in the magical world. This shows Harry that if he expects to win, he needs to rely on all of the things he's learned and use Voldemort's arrogance and ignorance to his advantage.

“Tell me one last thing,” said Harry. “Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?”

Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, obscuring his figure.

“Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?”

Related Characters: Albus Dumbledore (speaker), Harry Potter

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 723

Explanation and Analysis

As Harry and Dumbledore say goodbye and Harry prepares to return to life, Dumbledore assures Harry that this conversation was real, even if Dumbledore himself is dead. With this, the dream Dumbledore gives Harry the final tool that will allow Harry to make peace with Dumbledore's legacy. Though Dumbledore is indeed dead, this conversation allows Harry to orchestrate a situation in which he's able to engage with Dumbledore in a way that makes him comfortable, in which Dumbledore is a mentor imparting knowledge and Harry is a mentee receiving it. However, it's important to recognize that Harry already knows everything that Dumbledore “tells” him here; he just needed this setup in order to realize exactly what's going on. With this, Dumbledore shows Harry that he's capable of coming to conclusions on his own, and if Harry needs help, he already knows how to ask the questions that will lead him to the appropriate answers.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER ONE

Snape and Yaxley appear out of nowhere and walk together up a long driveway. Both men say they've been successful and shake their heads at Lucius Malfoy's white peacocks. They enter the manor house and hesitate at a huge door that enters onto a drawing room, where a fire casts light on a dining table and a person hanging upside-down over it. Voldemort greets them and asks Snape to sit next to him. Snape tells the table that Harry Potter will be moved next Saturday, though Yaxley challenges this and insists that Harry will move a week later. They argue and Snape says that Yaxley's source—Dawlish, an Auror at the Ministry—isn't reliable.

One man snickers that the Order of the Phoenix is correct in believing that the Death Eaters have infiltrated the Ministry. Voldemort ignores this and asks Snape where Harry will go next. Snape explains he'll go to the home of an Order member, and they won't be able to get to him there unless the Ministry has fallen by the time Harry moves. Voldemort turns to Yaxley, who proudly says that he put an Imperius Curse on Pius Thicknesse. Many seem impressed, but Voldemort says he needs Scrimgeour. Yaxley explains that they have people planted in the transportation office, so they'll know if Harry Apparates or uses Floo Powder. Snape says that the Order is going to move him in the open.

Voldemort looks at the hanging body and says that he's going to deal with Harry himself as to not let anyone else make mistakes. Everyone seems afraid that they'll be punished, but Voldemort says that he needs to be the one to kill Harry. A scream comes from somewhere in the manor, and Voldemort sends Wormtail to deal with it. Voldemort asks Lucius Malfoy to borrow his wand. Malfoy hesitates and glances at Narcissa Malfoy before passing his wand over. He makes a small movement as though to take Voldemort's wand, which Voldemort laughs at.

That the topic of conversation of the evening is information sets the tone for the rest of the novel. Rather than focusing on magnificent, exciting events, both Voldemort and Harry are now far more interested in gathering information that will hopefully inform the actions they do take, suggesting that these passages of information, keeping information quiet, and acquiring sources is far more important than the big events themselves.



The ways in which the Death Eaters have infiltrated the Ministry of Magic means that all of the people on Harry's side, especially those who aren't members of the Order of the Phoenix, have no real way to know what exactly what's going on (recall that the Ministry and the Daily Prophet are closely entwined, and the Prophet mostly prints or doesn't print what the Ministry tells it to). This indicates that, though Harry may be on the lookout for new information, he's going to have to look to other sources to find it.



Wands in general are a symbol of power, as possessing one allows a person to perform magic in the first place. Taking Lucius's wand allows Voldemort to further emasculate and disempower Lucius and the Malfoy family in general, and as Voldemort knows this, it suggests that he places a higher value on possessing these symbols of power and performing his power for others than in acquiring information.



Voldemort's snake, Nagini, climbs his chair and settles across his shoulders. Voldemort maliciously asks if the Malfoys are unhappy that he's back in power, to which Bellatrix—Narcissa's sister—says that having Voldemort in their home is an honor. Voldemort asks if it's as much of an honor as the fact that Bellatrix's niece, Tonks, just married Remus Lupin, a werewolf. Everyone laughs, and Bellatrix insists that Tonks isn't family. Voldemort reminds Bellatrix that she needs to "prune" her family tree.

Voldemort's suggestion that Bellatrix kill Tonks to "save" her bloodline reminds the reader that Voldemort only values familial relationships as long as they support his worldview of blood purity. Familial relationships built on love, trust, or anything else don't matter to him, something that sets him apart from Harry, whose important familial relationships are all chosen, not blood relations.



Voldemort points his wand at the hanging figure, who wakes up. The woman, Charity Burbage, asks Snape for help as Voldemort explains that she was the Muggle Studies teacher at Hogwarts. Voldemort gags her and says that she "polluted" students' minds, and she wants pureblooded wizards to reproduce with Muggles and werewolves. Voldemort kills her and lets Nagini eat her.

By killing Charity, Voldemort fundamentally alters the way that Muggle Studies will be taught at Hogwarts—he's certainly not going to replace her with someone just as tolerant. This shows how controlling education will allow him to control how wizards think of Muggles.



CHAPTER TWO

Harry, bleeding, pushes out of his bedroom, steps on a cup of tea—probably a trap set by Dudley—and rinses his hand in the bathroom. He sighs, wishing he could perform magic, but thinks that he doesn't know how to heal wounds anyway. Harry returns to his room and carefully looks through the bottom of his school trunk, where he finds the thing that made him bleed: a piece of an enchanted mirror that Sirius gave him. He puts it on top of the *Daily Prophet*, feeling bitter and sad, and finishes clearing out his trunk. He packs what he's taking with him in a rucksack.

Though Harry turns out to be wrong about the tea being a booby trap, it's worth noting that his assessment makes sense given his past relationship with Dudley. However, the very fact that Harry is wrong creates the possibility that even "bad guys" like Dudley have the capacity to change—but that their changes will really only be meaningful if Harry finds it in himself to forgive and see these acts of kindness for what they are.



Hedwig ignores Harry as he begins to go through the pile of newspapers on his desk. He finds the issue containing an obituary written by Elphias Doge about Dumbledore and sits down to read it. Doge writes about how he met Dumbledore at Hogwarts as first years, and Dumbledore was shockingly kind to him. Dumbledore arrived at school haunted by the news of his father Percival's horrific anti-Muggle crime, though Dumbledore proved to share none of his father's beliefs. He soon became famous as a brilliant student, went on to win prizes, and loved to teach. When his brother Aberforth arrived at Hogwarts three years later, the boys turned out to be very different but still great friends.

Doge's obituary reminds Harry that Dumbledore was young once too; he had to attend Hogwarts, receive an education, and come of age just like Harry is still in the process of doing. Though this is a difficult thing for Harry to process, it helps expand Harry's understanding of what it means to be an adult in the world and to see the people who are already adults as fully formed humans, not just beings who have been adults forever.



Doge writes that he and Dumbledore planned to tour the world after finishing school, but the death of Dumbledore's mother, Kendra, meant that Dumbledore couldn't come. His sister Ariana died about a year later, and Doge came home for the funeral to find Dumbledore miserable and estranged from Aberforth. Doge briefly recounts Dumbledore's biggest triumphs over the next few decades and then says that Dumbledore died working for the greater good. Harry stares at the photo of Dumbledore that accompanies the obituary and admits to himself that he didn't know Dumbledore well at all—Dumbledore never spoke about his past, and Harry never asked. Harry even thinks that what Dumbledore told him about what he saw in the Mirror of Erised was a lie. Regardless, he tucks the obituary in his knapsack.

Harry turns to the most recent *Prophet* issue and sees an article titled "Dumbledore—The Truth at Last?" It announces Rita Skeeter's next book, a biography of Dumbledore exploring his secrets. Harry finds the rest of the article, an interview with Skeeter, and reads that she finished the 900-page book four weeks after Dumbledore's death. Skeeter laughs at Doge's insistence that the biography is devoid of facts, and promises to expose Dumbledore's youthful interest in questionable beliefs and the Dark Arts, as well as "nastiness" concerning Kendra and Ariana, and the revelation that Dumbledore's famed defeat of Grindelwald wasn't spectacular. Skeeter mentions a chapter about Harry and questions whether or not Harry's belief that Snape killed Dumbledore is a lie.

Harry feels ill and angry and tosses the paper against the wall. He picks up the mirror fragment and sees a flash of a blue eye. He's sure he imagined seeing Dumbledore's eye, as Dumbledore is dead.

Though Harry has, in previous novels, demonstrated great maturity by recognizing his own role in not finding things out about his friends and classmates, it's telling that, here, he blames himself for not asking Dumbledore anything as well as Dumbledore for not offering anything about his past. This suggests that, in this instance, Harry sees Dumbledore as a figure who should've performed his mentorship role differently and should've given Harry more insight into his past. Essentially, in constructing his thought in this way, Harry longs to be a child who is told things, not an adult who should've asked.



Remember that Rita Skeeter's reporting shouldn't be taken at face value; while there might be small nuggets of truth in anything that she writes, she's not known for being impartial or truthful. With this, the novel sets up one of Harry's trajectories as being one in which he learns to effectively read critically as he pieces together what actually happened to Dumbledore and what's true in Rita Skeeter's book.



Though Harry knows that Dumbledore is indeed dead, his belief that he saw Dumbledore's eye speaks to the close relationship Harry had with him, and his desire for this to not end.



CHAPTER THREE

Harry hears Vernon calling for him. He takes his time putting down the mirror fragment and goes downstairs to find Vernon, Petunia, and Dudley all dressed for traveling. Vernon tells Harry he's decided he doesn't believe it and won't go. Harry rolls his eyes; Vernon has been changing his mind daily about whether or not to let wizards take him into hiding. Vernon recoils when Harry reminds him of Kingsley Shacklebolt and Mr. Weasley's visit a few weeks ago, when they explained that the Dursleys won't be safe here once Harry turns seventeen. Vernon asks why the Ministry can't protect them, but Harry reminds him that the Ministry is compromised.

At this point, Vernon is having to learn lessons that Harry learned several novels ago: that governments (and particularly, the Wizarding government) aren't something that he can trust blindly. Vernon, like Voldemort, places more emphasis on the displays of power, which he equates with the establishment and not with fringe resistance groups like the Order of the Phoenix. Further, accepting that Harry is right about this will mean that Vernon has to walk back his critiques of the magical world—something that's certainly going to be uncomfortable for him.



Vernon asks why they can't have Kingsley protect them—Kingsley is better at dressing like a Muggle and has a reassuring voice. Harry reminds Vernon that Kingsley is protecting the Muggle Prime Minister and points out the "accidents" on TV are Voldemort, not accidents, and the fog is caused by dementors. Dudley looks terrified, but Vernon asks what they're supposed to do about work and school. Dudley says loudly that he's going with the Order. They'll arrive in a few minutes and Harry wonders what he should say after sixteen years of abuse.

Harry heads back upstairs to comfort Hedwig, but returns to the living room when he hears Dedalus Diggle and Hestia Jones arrive and greet the Dursleys. Dedalus explains the plan and politely asks Vernon if he can drive. Vernon is flabbergasted, especially when Dedalus's pocket watch screams at them to hurry up. Vernon makes to shake Harry's hand but can't bring himself to do it and then heads to the door with Petunia. Dudley, however, asks why Harry isn't coming with them, and where he's going to go. Everyone is shocked, and Hestia gets angry when Vernon says that Harry's going off with "their lot." Harry reassures her and says that the Dursleys think he's a waste of space, but Dudley says he doesn't think that about Harry since Harry saved his life.

Harry stares at Dudley and realizes that Dudley may have left the cup of tea as an act of kindness, not a trap. Petunia bursts into tears and embraces Dudley, while Hestia and Dedalus try to move things along. Dudley pulls away from Petunia and shakes Harry's hand. They smile at each other and Dudley leaves. Harry and Petunia stare at each other for a moment and it seems as though she wants to say something, but she leaves without a word.

CHAPTER FOUR

Harry watches the Dursleys drive away and then moves his things downstairs, thinking it's strange to be in the house for the last time. Hedwig continues to ignore Harry as he opens up the closet under the stairs, noticing how small it looks. Hearing a roar outside, Harry sees people appear in the backyard, including Hagrid on a giant motorcycle. Ron greets Harry as Mad-Eye Moody, Hermione, Fred, George, Bill, Mr. Weasley, Tonks, Lupin, Fleur, Kingsley, and Mundungus Fletcher file into the kitchen. Tonks gleefully waves her new wedding ring at Harry, but Moody calls them to attention and explains there's been a change of plan.

Dudley's choice to go with the Order continues to build the case that Dudley isn't as unintelligent or as interested in pure brute strength as Harry thought he was. Though this choice is certainly motivated by fear, his willingness to accept as truth something that he also fears, but that he knows will save him, represents a major leap for Dudley and suggests that he might finally believe Harry.



Telling Harry that he's not a waste of space shows that, at least now, when he possibly won't have to see Harry again, Dudley is comfortable behaving in a kind and vulnerable way to Harry. This continues to show Harry that if he's willing to look, he'll be able to find allies in all manner of unexpected places—even in a place that he hates and has historically been abusive toward him. Dudley now, on some level, joins the people resisting Voldemort on Harry's behalf and the people who support Harry.



Being the only one willing to shake Harry's hand suggests that, in this moment, Dudley himself begins to come of age and differentiates himself from his cruel parents. He opens the door to have a relationship with Harry in the future, and the handshake offers Harry some small sense of support from this unexpected corner.



Revisiting the cupboard under the stairs for the first time in years allows both Harry and the reader to come face to face with how much Harry has grown and changed over the course of the novels. While the cupboard was always a tight squeeze, now, it's unthinkable that Harry could fit there—he's both too large physically, and he's come too far emotionally to put up with that particular kind of abuse anymore.



Since the Ministry can still spy on Harry using his Trace, they're going to break the protection guaranteed by Lily's sacrifice early by moving to one of several secure locations. To throw off any waiting Death Eaters, there will be seven Harrys, thanks to Polyjuice Potion. Harry refuses to let his friends sacrifice for him, and Fred and George tease him for trying to stop this. Moody growls that this is the only way and furiously, Harry pulls out hair and hands it to Moody. Those who will impersonate Harry line up and accept a cup of Polyjuice Potion. After they transform, they change clothes, put on glasses, and grab fake luggage.

Moody barks out who's traveling with whom by broom and thestral. Harry is anxious to learn he'll be riding with Hagrid on the motorcycle, but Moody explains that Voldemort will expect Harry on a broom. In the garden, Harry climbs into the motorcycle's sidecar. Hagrid points out trick buttons as Moody sends everyone off. Within a minute, Harry sees hooded figures shooting spells at him. As Hagrid rolls the bike, Harry drops his broomstick but manages to catch Hedwig's cage. A flash of green light hits her and she falls to the floor of her cage. Harry insists they go back, but Hagrid refuses. Harry starts shooting curses at the Death Eaters.

Hagrid starts pushing buttons and a brick wall erupts from the exhaust pipe. Harry shoots more curses as Hagrid deploys a net and then dragon fire. The acceleration causes the sidecar to start to separate, so Hagrid pulls out his pink umbrella and the sidecar comes entirely apart. Harry levitates the sidecar and finally, Hagrid grabs Harry and throws him onto the back of his seat. Harry lights the falling sidecar on fire and thinks of Hedwig. Harry shoots a jinx at Stan Shunpike and, suddenly, the Death Eaters shout "it's the real one" and disappear.

Hagrid uses the dragon fire button again and as they start to descend, Harry sees Voldemort flying without a broom. Hagrid starts a vertical dive and throws himself off the bike onto a Death Eater. Harry can't see from the pain in his scar, but his wand spins of its own accord and shoots golden fire at Voldemort, exploding Voldemort's wand. Harry punches the dragon fire button and knows he's going to crash. Harry stares into Voldemort's eyes before Voldemort suddenly vanishes. The bike crashes into a pond.

Harry has good reason to not want his friends to sacrifice for him—he's lost his parents, Sirius, and Dumbledore because they tried to protect him. However, Harry's anger and unwillingness to let his friends help means that he's not being a good friend himself. Part of being a good friend is respecting others' autonomy to make decisions about this. Further, Harry can't function alone—he needs others to help him accomplish his goals.



That Hedwig—an innocent, non-threatening, and caged friend of Harry's—is the first to die reminds the reader that Voldemort and the Death Eaters kill willy-nilly, without any thought for who and why they're killing. It reinforces for Harry that he is going to lose people he loves over the course of this war, and that even the best laid plans can't protect everyone. Regardless, Harry still needs these people in order to simply move through the world.



Remember that Hagrid's umbrella probably contains his broken wand. His unsuccessful attempt to repair the sidecar here exemplifies the consequences of not receiving a complete magical education: he can't do it, and it puts Harry in even more danger. This reads as a cautionary tale, in which the novel suggests that depriving a person of their education can ultimately harm others.



The spinning wand is, importantly, something that perplexes both Voldemort and Harry—clearly, there's something that neither of them know about their wands. This sets up one of Harry's quests for knowledge in which he must figure out what exactly is going on with his wand and, in doing so, how to best Voldemort—a quest that Voldemort embarks upon in the reverse.



CHAPTER FIVE

Harry drags himself out of the pond, bleeding, and calls for Hagrid. He comes to inside, his injuries healed, and Ted Tonks introduces himself. Ted explains that his wife is seeing to Hagrid. Ted is concerned that Death Eaters knew about the plan, but says that Death Eaters can't get within 100 yards of his house. Harry starts to get up just as Hagrid squeezes through the door. Noticing the woman behind Hagrid, Harry shouts at her, but Ted says she's his wife, Mrs. Tonks. Mrs. Tonks looks shockingly like her sister, Bellatrix Lestrange.

Harry says they need to take the Portkey to the Burrow. Ted assures Mrs. Tonks that Tonks is fine and leads Harry and Hagrid into a bedroom, where a hairbrush is waiting for them. Hagrid asks where Hedwig is and Harry gulps that she died. Harry and Hagrid spin away from the Tonks' house and land hard in the yard of the Burrow. Mrs. Weasley and Ginny run toward them. Nobody else is back.

Lupin and George arrive. George is unconscious and bleeding: his ear is missing. Harry helps Lupin carry him inside. Lupin grabs Harry, verifies his identity, and explains that someone betrayed them. Harry can't believe that someone in the Order betrayed them and, to support this, says that it took Voldemort a while to figure out which one was the real Harry—he couldn't have known the entire plan. He tells Lupin of his journey and says that he Disarmed Stan Shunpike, which shocks Lupin. Lupin tells Harry to Stun people if he's not going to kill them. He says that Death Eaters likely think that *Expelliarmus* is Harry's signature spell, but Harry says he won't be like Voldemort and kill people for no reason.

Harry asks if George will be okay. Lupin crumples and says he should be, just as Kingsley and Hermione land in the yard. Kingsley and Lupin suspiciously test each other and Kingsley spits that someone betrayed them. They discuss Voldemort's ability to fly and Harry's behavior toward Stan Shunpike, whom Kingsley explains broke out of Azkaban with many others. Lupin says that Snape is the one who cursed George's ear off as Hagrid calls Harry inside. George is stable and Harry meets Ginny's eyes, wanting to hold her. They hear a crash and Mr. Weasley roars that he needs to see his son. He and Fred enter and Fred seems lost for words. George stirs and says he feels "saintlike." He meets Fred's eyes and says that he's "holey." Mrs. Weasley sobs.

The fact that the Order's plan was clearly leaked to the Death Eaters creates a sense of confusion and distrust among everyone. This shows how Voldemort seizes even more power by making it so that people fear trusting their friends and neighbors, thereby hobbling any resistance activities.



Having to tell Hagrid about Hedwig's death puts it in perspective for Harry that many people (and animals) are going to die for him over the course of this fight. Harry's guilt and emotion shows that this isn't easy for him, and it continues to develop his self-sacrificing nature.



Harry's refusal to be like Voldemort and kill people for no reason reveals one of the many things that sets Harry apart from Voldemort: he values lives for their own sake, not just because a living person is useful to him. Harry, in other words, is willing to lean on and trust his wider community, rather than blast it apart to protect himself, even when doing so is dangerous and could possibly result in his own death or injury.



That George stirs and makes jokes once he's reunited with Fred speaks to the power of close relationships and to community—his relationship with his twin is strong and important enough to return him to who he is, despite the pain. This should be an instructive moment for Harry, who will try to dissuade Ron and Hermione from coming with him on his quest. Being with his friends, however, will help Harry remember who he is, what he's fighting for, and ultimately, maintain a sense of humor about the whole thing.



Ginny and Harry head back outside and Ginny takes Harry's hand. They watch Kingsley pace and suddenly, Tonks and Ron barrel to the ground on brooms. Tonks falls into Lupin's arms as Hermione embraces Ron. Tonks explains that Bellatrix was trying to kill her. Kingsley leaves for the Prime Minister as Bill and Fleur fly into sight. Mrs. Weasley flies at Bill, who says that Moody is dead: Mundungus panicked and Disapparated, and Voldemort got Moody. Harry can't believe it. They head inside and Bill pours firewhiskey for everyone. They drink to Moody and decide that Mundungus didn't betray them; he just panicked.

Fleur spits that *someone* betrayed them. Harry says that if someone let something slip and made a mistake, he knows they didn't do it on purpose. Harry thinks that Moody was always derisive about Dumbledore's desire to trust people, but Fred and George cheer Harry. Lupin says that Harry is just like James, who would've been disgusted at the idea of not trusting his friends. Lupin and Bill leave to retrieve Moody's body and Harry announces that he needs to leave. Mrs. Weasley explains that Harry is safe and needs to stay. Mr. Weasley joins in and Harry feels blackmailed into staying.

Hagrid tells Harry that people will love to hear that he fought Voldemort off again, but Harry says that his wand acted by itself. Both Hermione and Mr. Weasley point out that this isn't possible. Harry's scar burns. He knows what happened, but he's also never heard of a wand doing magic on its own. Harry excuses himself and steps outside, thinking that Dumbledore would've believed him. The pain reaches a peak and Harry hears and sees Voldemort yelling at Ollivander that using another person's wand was supposed to work. Harry returns to his own mind in the garden when Hermione and Ron ask him to come inside. He tells them what he saw, and Hermione sternly says to not let Voldemort into his mind.

CHAPTER SIX

Harry feels like the only thing that will relieve the guilt he feels about Moody's death is setting out immediately to find and destroy the Horcruxes. One morning, Ron points out that Harry is stuck until he turns seventeen and the Ministry no longer has a Trace on him, and they have to stay an extra day for the wedding. Ron warns Harry that, while Mr. Weasley and Lupin both understand that the trio are dropping out of school, Mrs. Weasley is determined to stop them. Sure enough, Mrs. Weasley corners Harry a few hours later and tries to guilt him into staying. When Harry refuses, Mrs. Weasley abruptly asks him to help with wedding preparations.

Though Moody certainly didn't want to die, it's important to keep in mind that Moody died for a cause he believed in wholeheartedly and that, if asked, he'd probably say he was willing to die for. This introduces to Harry the idea that, while death may be scary on a variety of levels, it's important to try to think of it as being something that will happen on one's own terms. For Moody, this means dying for a cause.



Though Harry's guilt is understandable, wanting to leave after all of these people sacrificed and died for him tells them that Harry doesn't truly respect their sacrifice—instead, he's willing to go back out and make it so that their sacrifices and hard work didn't mean much. Staying, on the other hand, would allow Harry to show them that he respects their sacrifice and is willing to honor what they did for him by keeping himself safe.



In the case of Harry's wand's strange behavior, he begins to get practice with holding two opposing truths in his mind at once: that his wand did this odd thing, and that wands shouldn't be able to do this in the first place. This will give Harry practice as he struggles to reconcile the Dumbledore he knew with the Dumbledore he learns about from others, who dabbled in questionable things in his youth. Voldemort torturing Ollivander suggests that he's becoming disenchanted with the idea of hunting for knowledge and will use physical might when information fails him.



While Mrs. Weasley is misguided in her attempts to keep Ron, Harry, and Hermione from setting out on their own, it's important to keep in mind that she's doing this to try to keep them safe. She still believes that Hogwarts is the safest place for them, which the reader knows is a questionable belief given that Voldemort recently murdered Charity Burbage and that Snape is presumably still at the school.



Mrs. Weasley begins assigning Harry, Ron, and Hermione tasks that they can't do together and that keep them too busy to chat. A few days later, Ginny confirms that Mrs. Weasley is trying to keep the trio from leaving. Harry asks if she expects someone else to kill Voldemort while they all make party favors and insists it was a joke when Ginny's face goes pale. They stop talking when Mr. Weasley, Kingsley, and Bill arrive for dinner. The Burrow is now the headquarters for the Order, as number twelve, Grimmauld Place is no longer safe. Over supper, they discuss that they haven't found Moody's body and that the *Prophet* hasn't reported Harry's use of underage magic, likely in an attempt to try to keep it quiet that Voldemort attacked Harry.

Ron angrily asks if anyone at the Ministry is prepared to stand up to Voldemort, but Mr. Weasley insists that everyone is terrified that their children will be targeted. He says he doesn't believe that Charity Burbage resigned and hopes that Scrimgeour is planning something useful. Mrs. Weasley sends Ron to clean his room, Hermione to change the sheets for Monsieur Delacour and Madame Delacour, and Harry to help Mr. Weasley with the chicken coop. There's nothing to do with the coop—Mr. Weasley is hiding the remains of Sirius's motorcycle in it—so Harry sneaks up to Ron's bedroom.

Harry finds Ron on the bed and Hermione sorting books into two huge piles. They discuss whether or not Moody is actually dead, and Harry suggests that the Death Eaters transfigured his body and hid it. At this, Hermione bursts into tears. Ron leaps off the bed to comfort Hermione and reminds her of Moody's catchphrase, "constant vigilance." With a small laugh, Hermione reaches for another book and explains that she's choosing which books to take with them.

Harry sits up straight and calls Hermione and Ron to attention. They roll their eyes and tell Harry to not even bother trying to convince them to not come. Hermione says she's been packing for days, has stolen Moody's stock of Polyjuice Potion, and has modified her parents' memories and sent them to Australia to protect them. She tells Ron to show Harry what he's done, and Ron leads Harry to the attic. There, Harry sees the Weasleys' ghoulish red hair, pustules, and pajamas—once Ron leaves, the ghoulish will move into Ron's room to pose as Ron with spattergroit. Both of these measures will explain Ron and Hermione's absences from Hogwarts. Harry realizes that his friends are going to come with him, even though they understand the danger.

Keeping the trio apart allows Mrs. Weasley to control the exchange of information, something that, to her credit, does keep them from engaging in meaningful planning sessions. However, this also means that the trio instead plans individually—especially Hermione—something that, in the long run, means that the first few days of being on the run are difficult, as Harry and Ron have no idea what Hermione has been up to. This shows how love that takes the form of control, while benevolent, can also be misguided and ultimately dangerous.



Mr. Weasley hits on a really important point here: while Voldemort gives no brain space to caring about other people's children, he knows that other people—and specifically, other people he'd like to subjugate—spend a lot of time thinking about their children's safety. By preying on this and using it to his advantage, Voldemort can then bring these people under his control without having to do anything but threaten them.



The question of whether or not people are actually dead isn't a silly one, given that the trio lives in a magical world where all manner of things are possible. However, their desire to reconnect with those who are indeed dead suggests that they're putting more energy into this than they should be, energy that they could be using to put Moody's advice about vigilance into practice.



While Harry's desire to protect his friends is certainly noble, he still doesn't fully understand that, in order to be a good friend to them, he needs to respect their choices and their help. Understanding that they've done everything they can to protect the people they love in preparation for coming with Harry helps Harry to feel validated and as though he can fully trust Hermione and Ron to be there for him, especially since Harry sees himself as a liability and a danger to people close to him.



They hear Mrs. Weasley yelling from downstairs and Ron laments that the Delacours are coming so early. Hermione suggests that the trio should figure out where they're going first and says she thinks that going to Godric's Hollow isn't the best plan. She suggests that Voldemort might have spies there. Ron suggests that R.A.B. might have already destroyed the real Horcrux, but Hermione points out they need to track it down anyway. Ron asks how a person destroys a Horcrux, and Hermione turns pink and says she's been researching. She explains that the books on Horcruxes were taken out of the library, but she was able to Summon them out of Dumbledore's office after he died. She pulls the book out.

Hermione tells Ron that a person can put their soul back together if they feel remorse, which Voldemort will never do. She reads that basilisk fangs are one of the only surefire ways of destroying a Horcrux, as they have to destroy Horcruxes "beyond magical repair." Ron asks if the soul can then go live in something else, but Hermione explains that Horcruxes are the opposite of people: stabbing Ron wouldn't harm his soul, while Horcruxes depend on their containers to survive. Ron asks how Tom Riddle's diary was able to possess Ginny, and Hermione explains that it can happen when a person gets emotionally close to a Horcrux. Harry wonders how Dumbledore destroyed the ring as Mrs. Weasley bursts in and demands help with wedding gifts.

Madame Delacour and Monsieur Delacour arrive in the morning and turn out to be happy and helpful houseguests. With the house so full, Harry, Ron, and Hermione have no time alone to make plans. Mrs. Weasley interrupts them at the chicken coop one evening and asks Harry what he wants to do for his birthday. Harry insists that a normal dinner will be fine. Mrs. Weasley assures Harry it's no trouble and gives him a sad smile. Harry feels horrible; he knows he's inconveniencing and hurting her.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Ron shakes Harry awake from a dream in which Harry was looking for a man who can solve his problem. Ron tells Harry that he was muttering "Gregorovitch," a name that neither of them can place. Realizing he's seventeen now, Harry starts performing magic and accepts Ron's present, a book on how to woo witches. Downstairs, Mrs. Weasley directs Harry to the present on the top of the pile. It's a watch, which she explains belonged to her brother and is a traditional gift for a seventeen-year-old. Harry hugs her. Hermione gives Harry a Sneakoscope, while the twins give Harry joke merchandise. Hermione grabs Harry's presents to pack them as Ginny calls Harry into her bedroom.

That acquiring these banned books was so easy for Hermione begins to establish evidence that Dumbledore was setting the trio up to continue his work and have the information they need, even if acquiring it becomes more difficult as they go on. This also continues to reinforce the importance of research and acquiring information, which will be necessary if the trio intends to truly find and do away with the Horcruxes.



Hermione's recitation of what makes a Horcrux a Horcrux and what a person must do to make them suggests that Horcruxes may be able to make a person relatively immortal, but they also make a person less than human—especially since the series as a whole has suggested time and again that what makes people human is the ability to love, grieve, and feel remorse. This begins to show Harry that immortality isn't something he or anyone else should strive for in the first place if they care about actually being truly human.



Given what Harry recently learned about Horcruxes, the fact that he feels awful for inconveniencing Mrs. Weasley should be a reminder that he is indeed human—and that her pain, whatever she's feeling, is also what makes her human and what fuels her desire to protect Harry and make him feel loved by celebrating his birthday.



Receiving the watch from Mrs. Weasley does two things. First, it reinforces Harry's role as a surrogate son of the Weasleys, as this seems to be a gift that comes from a parent or other important family member. Second, it's a gift that marks that Harry has come of age in the eyes of the Wizarding world. Taken together, the watch then allows Harry to take his place as an adult member of the Weasley family and to truly understand that they love him, care for him, and will stand by him no matter what.



Ginny meets Harry's eyes and says she had no idea what to get him that he'd be able to take with him, so she wants to give him something to remember her by. She kisses him, but Ron bursts in and interrupts. Harry feels as though Ron reminds him of all of the reasons Harry broke up with Ginny in the first place. He follows Ron and Hermione outside, where Ron turns on Harry and tells Harry to stop groping Ginny. Ginny ignores Harry for the rest of the day.

Charlie, Lupin, Tonks, and Hagrid arrive for Harry's birthday dinner. Mrs. Weasley carries out a cake decorated like a Snitch. Lupin looks oddly unhappy. Hagrid gives Harry a moleskin pouch, which won't let anyone but its owner access the contents. Everyone waits for Mr. Weasley until his Patronus arrives, saying that Scrimgeour is coming with him. Lupin drags Tonks away and, a moment later, Mr. Weasley and Scrimgeour arrive. Scrimgeour requests to speak with Harry, Ron, and Hermione. They go to the sitting room and the trio refuse to speak to Scrimgeour individually. He explains that he's here because of Dumbledore's will, and Hermione scathingly says that the Ministry has probably been going through Dumbledore's things for the last month, after which they have to give them up.

Scrimgeour ignores Hermione and asks Ron if he and Dumbledore were close. Ron says they weren't, and Scrimgeour wants to know why Dumbledore left him anything. Scrimgeour pulls out the will and reads that Ron should receive his Deluminator, an item that looks like a cigarette lighter that sucks lights out of a place. Scrimgeour pulls out a book titled *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* for Hermione. Finally, Scrimgeour gives Harry the Snitch that he caught during his first Quidditch match. Scrimgeour asks if there's more to it, and Hermione points out that Snitches have "flesh memories;" Dumbledore could've left something inside that only Harry could access. Harry touches the Snitch but nothing happens. None of them can explain why Dumbledore left them these objects.

Finally, Scrimgeour says that Dumbledore also left Harry the sword of Gryffindor, which he says wasn't Dumbledore's to give. He angrily asks if Dumbledore thought Harry could use it to kill Voldemort, but Harry suggests that the Ministry try killing Voldemort with swords instead of covering up Azkaban breakouts. Harry and Scrimgeour both stand and Scrimgeour pokes his wand at Harry's chest, leaving a small burn in Harry's shirt. Mr. Weasley and Mrs. Weasley burst in and Scrimgeour steps back. He tells Harry that they should work together, but Harry refuses. Scrimgeour leaves.

Ron's attempt to "protect" Ginny is misguided—it's not like Ginny didn't want to kiss Harry—but the attempt shows that Ron is extremely loyal to those he loves and wants them to be happy. However, like Mrs. Weasley, Ron doesn't always use the appropriate tools to show this love, hence this awkward moment.



Presenting a united front to Scrimgeour allows Harry, Ron, and Hermione to reaffirm their friendship with each other and make it clear to others that breaking them up will be impossible. As obnoxious as this is in Scrimgeour's eyes, this shows the reader that the trio are committed to being there for each other and defending each other and their friendship in front of adversaries. This also gives them practice in working together without having a plan in front of people like Scrimgeour.



For Scrimgeour, the fact that Dumbledore left three teenagers these odd things throws it in his face that Dumbledore didn't trust him—and instead, trusted teens with, possibly, the information on how to do away with Voldemort. Scrimgeour's interest in cracking this mystery, however, suggests that, though he is Harry's adversary in this moment, he also understands the importance of seeking information rather than just bullying people around, like Voldemort does.



Calling Scrimgeour out on covering up the Azkaban breakout allows Harry to advocate for telling the truth rather than obscuring information. This shows that Harry understands that the only way forward is to create an environment in which people can trust what they're hearing, which means that the Ministry needs to admit that it's failing in places—something that Scrimgeour's pride won't let him do.



Over dinner, the guests pass around the objects from Dumbledore. They eat quickly and then Harry, Ron, and Hermione meet in Ron's bedroom. Harry puts the Marauder's Map, the shard from Sirius's mirror, and the locket into his moleskin bag. Ron plays with the Deluminator and Hermione points out that they could've gotten darkness through other means. They agree that Dumbledore knew the Ministry would search the contents of his will, but can't figure out why he didn't tell them about these things in life. Harry admits that he didn't try to open the Snitch in front of Scrimgeour; this is the Snitch he almost swallowed. He puts it to his lips and it doesn't open, but the words "I open at the close" appear.

Harry feels like he should be able to figure out the riddle, and that he should know why Dumbledore didn't give him the sword when he had the chance last year. Ron is shocked that Harry and Hermione haven't heard of Beedle the Bard, the author of classic Wizarding children's tales.

The fact that Dumbledore didn't tell the trio his intentions in leaving them these objects adds to Harry's sense that he didn't actually know Dumbledore well at all. This creates even more mystery surrounding Harry's relationship with Dumbledore and, indeed, makes Harry feel as though he wasn't actually friends with Dumbledore in the first place—a consequence of not having open communication with his former headmaster.



While The Tales of Beedle the Bard is a collection of children's stories, it's worth keeping in mind that there are often important lessons to learn from kids' stories—something that Dumbledore, no doubt, is well aware of.



CHAPTER EIGHT

The next afternoon, Ron, Fred, George, and Harry, who is disguised with Polyjuice Potion as Cousin Barny, prepare to show wedding guests to their seats. Fred grouches about how he won't go to all this trouble when he gets married just as some of Fleur's cousins arrive. Harry shows Lupin and Tonks to their seats and notices again that Lupin looks miserable. When Harry gets back to the entrance, he meets Xenophilus Lovegood, Luna's father. He's dressed eccentrically in bright yellow robes and wears a pendant that looks like an odd, triangular eye. Luna pops up and recognizes Harry through his disguise.

Ron appears with Auntie Muriel, an ancient witch who is disappointed to meet Cousin Barny, insults Fleur, and suggests that Harry is spineless for not coming. Harry, Ron, and Hermione meet back at the entrance ten minutes later. Hermione looks beautiful but explains that Muriel insisted she had skinny ankles. George joins them and says that Muriel insulted his "lopsided" ears. Viktor Krum arrives. Hermione is ecstatic, but Ron rudely asks Krum why he came. Harry shows Krum to his seat and then sits down. Fleur and Monsieur Delacour come down the aisle, Ginny and Gabrielle behind them. When the ceremony is over, a dance floor appears.

That Harry is aware that something is up with Lupin shows that he's now very tuned in to his community and how they're feeling, even if he doesn't know the reasons why. This indicates that, though Harry still has a long way to go, he's becoming a better friend in that he's getting better at paying attention rather than being too caught up in his own thoughts and emotions to notice what's going on around him.



Everything that Harry discovers about Auntie Muriel here should tell him that she's not exactly someone whose thoughts and opinions he should take at face value—she clearly has strong and misguided opinions and is less interested in facts, like that George's ear was cursed off. Krum's attendance at the wedding reminds Harry that he still has an international community if he remembers to call on it.



Ron, Harry, and Hermione join Luna at an empty table. When Luna gets up to dance, Krum takes her seat. He scowls, wants to know who Xenophilius is, and looks even less pleased when Ron drags Hermione to dance. Krum growls at Harry that Xenophilius is wearing the evil wizard Grindelwald's sign. Harry is perplexed; he's sure that Xenophilius doesn't support the Dark Arts. He does a poor job of explaining that the Lovegoods likely don't know what the symbol means and then blurts, "Gregorovitch." Harry remembers that Gregorovitch is the wandmaker who made Krum's wand and thinks that Voldemort is looking for a wandmaker who might know more than Ollivander. Krum strides off.

Later that evening, Harry recognizes Elphias Doge sitting alone, joins him, and reveals his identity. They discuss that Doge knew Dumbledore well, and Harry asks if he saw Rita Skeeter's insistence that Dumbledore was involved in the Dark Arts. Doge tells Harry to not believe it, but Harry isn't reassured—this isn't a matter of belief; Harry wants the truth. As Doge prepares to reassure Harry more, Auntie Muriel joins them, cackling that she needs to pre-order Rita Skeeter's book. She guzzles champagne and accuses Doge of ignoring the darker parts of Dumbledore's past in his obituary. She crows that Dumbledore "did away with his Squib sister," but Doge says that Dumbledore kept her existence quiet because Ariana was unwell. Muriel suggests that Ariana was kept locked in a cellar by Kendra and Dumbledore.

Muriel insists that the Dumbledore family kept Ariana a secret because of shame, while Doge insists that Ariana was just unwell. Muriel cackles as she says that Aberforth broke Dumbledore's nose at Ariana's funeral, and Dumbledore didn't defend himself. Harry doesn't know what's true, but he finds it hard to believe that Dumbledore would stand for cruelty in his home. Muriel hiccups that Rita Skeeter surely got the inside scoop from Bathilda Bagshot, who was a close friend of the Dumbledores in Godric's Hollow. Harry chokes on his drink. He's shocked to learn that Dumbledore was also from Godric's Hollow and that he never said anything. Harry feels lied to. Hermione comes over just as Kingsley's lynx Patronus arrives and announces that the Ministry fell and Scrimgeour is dead.

It's important to remember that as an international wizard, Krum has a very different view on world history than Harry, as a British wizard, will—it's possible that his interpretation of the symbol is colored primarily by the fact that Grindelwald was more active in his country than because of anything to do with what the symbol actually means. This should flag for Harry that he's going to need to think critically about what he learns and recognize that he should engage with information keeping in mind where that information came from.



Though Harry's desire for the truth is understandable, it's worth noting that the one person capable of giving Harry the truth—Dumbledore himself—is dead. Furthermore, even if Dumbledore were able to speak to Harry about this, that doesn't mean that Dumbledore's version is the inarguable truth anyway. That Harry doesn't recognize this suggests that he's still fixating on acquiring information that really isn't available to him and, instead, he should do as Doge suggests and figure out how to make sense of Dumbledore's legacy.



Despite Harry's understandable desire to know the truth about Dumbledore's past, it's also worth keeping in mind that Harry and Dumbledore's relationship was mostly one that centered on Harry's experiences and Dumbledore's ability to pass along knowledge, not an intensely personal relationship that flowed in both directions. That Harry seems to crave that kind of a personal relationship with Dumbledore now that Dumbledore is gone shows how much Harry desires a parent figure in his life.



CHAPTER NINE

Harry and Hermione race through the panicking crowd, trying to find Ron. They find him and Hermione Apparates with them to Tottenham Court Road in London. They walk and Harry laments not having his Invisibility Cloak. Hermione leads them into an alley and out of her tiny beaded purse pulls out changes of clothes and the Cloak. She explains that she has an Extension Charm on her purse. She shakes it and they hear the books tumbling. Hermione assures Harry that they can't go back; the Death Eaters are after him and the Order will protect wedding guests.

Hermione leads them into a greasy cafe. They order coffees and Hermione hisses that they already know what Voldemort is up to; there's no need to head for the Leaky Cauldron. A minute later, two workmen squeeze into another booth. They wave their waitress away as Hermione reaches into her purse for money. The workmen draw wands, as does Harry, and they shoot spells at each other. Harry Stuns one and tries to get the other. Hermione binds the man after he blows up part of the cafe. Harry and Ron recognize them as Death Eaters, lock the door, and turn out the lights. Hermione performs a Memory Charm on them while Harry and Ron put the cafe back in order.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione wonder how the Death Eaters found them. They wonder if Harry still has the Trace and, feeling contaminated, Harry suggests they split up. Ron and Hermione refuse, but Harry is able to convince them to go to Grimmauld Place. They reason that Snape is the only Death Eater who can get in, and they know that Moody put charms in place to thwart Snape's entry. They Apparate there and let themselves in. The entryway is dark and empty, and an overturned umbrella stand is the only thing out of place. Harry takes a step forward. Moody's voice asks, "Severus Snape?" and the trio's tongues roll up and flatten again. Then, a horrific effigy of Dumbledore flies at them and explodes when Harry says that they didn't kill him.

Harry leads them down the hallway. Hermione raises her wand and whispers, "*Homenum revelio*." When nothing happens Ron comforts her, but Hermione snaps that she checked for human presence and nobody's here. They go up to the drawing room and Ron looks out the windows. He suggests that Harry can't have the Trace since there aren't any Death Eaters outside, but Harry can't pay attention—his scar starts burning with pain. Ron asks Harry if he saw anyone at the Burrow, but Harry says that Voldemort is just angry. Hermione shrieks for Harry to close his mind. Harry turns angrily away, but a weasel Patronus flies through the window and, in Mr. Weasley's voice, says that the family is safe and to not reply.

This is the first instance in which Harry truly discovers that he couldn't do this without Hermione—she had the foresight to pack everything they'd need and was able to get them out when Harry was more concentrated on just finding his friends. Should Harry choose to learn from this, it will show him that he needs all the qualities his friends bring to the table in order to be safe and successful.



The fact that these Death Eaters were able to find Harry, Ron, and Hermione suggests that there's already magic at work that the trio don't know about, given that it's unclear how the Death Eaters discovered where they went. This gives the trio one more thing that they'll need to find out as they go forward, as knowing how to keep Voldemort from finding them will be one of the most important elements of staying safe.



Choosing to return to Grimmauld Place represents a choice by the trio to trust in their wider community to protect them. Especially since Harry is also unsuccessful in getting Hermione and Ron to leave him, this impresses upon Harry the importance of relying on his community, both large and small, to make his way easier. That Moody's charms are still effective after his death shows how a person can continue to create meaningful change even after death; he's directly responsible for keeping Snape out of Grimmauld Place.



Mr. Weasley's request that Harry, Ron, and Hermione not reply signals that the trio is now effectively cut off from the rest of their community. In this moment, the knowledge that the family is safe might be good, but it doesn't feel as meaningful, given that it's unsafe to attempt to make contact with them later. As they now set off on their own, all three of the trio will begin to come of age and become more independent out of necessity—there are no adults to help them anymore.



The pain in Harry's scar reaches a peak as Hermione asks if they can all sleep in the drawing room. Harry excuses himself to the bathroom, locks himself in, and finds himself in Voldemort's eyes, torturing one of his Death Eaters with Draco Malfoy's help. Harry comes to in the bathroom, haunted by the terrified look on Malfoy's face.

That Draco is so horrified by what he's doing suggests that Malfoy is less interested in helping Voldemort than he is in surviving. This gives him the room to make choices that will allow him to atone for what he's done and emerge a better person when all is said and done.



CHAPTER TEN

Harry wakes up the next morning and sees that it looks like Ron and Hermione fell asleep holding hands. He thinks about what will come, and feels as though Muriel's accusations about Dumbledore are poisoning his mind. He resents that Dumbledore never told him anything and wonders if Dumbledore never cared about him at all. He gets up and begins to explore the upstairs bedrooms. Someone went through them roughly. Harry wonders if it was Mundungus or Snape. He goes up another floor and enters Sirius's room. The walls are plastered in Gryffindor hangings, motorcycles, and Muggle girls in bikinis. There's one photo of Sirius, James, Lupin, and Wormtail, but it's stuck to the wall with a Permanent Sticking Charm.

It's telling that Harry's first thoughts in the morning are doubts about whether or not Dumbledore cared about him. This makes it clear that, though Harry may be afraid for his safety and worried about what comes next, he's still unreasonably fixated on information that he cannot get. Going through Sirius's room is another way that Harry is trying to get answers that aren't truly possible to obtain. While looking through Sirius's things gives Harry another look into the godfather he loved, it won't bring him any closer to reckoning with Sirius's legacy.



Looking through the detritus on the floor, Harry finds the first page of a letter that Lily wrote to Sirius, thanking him for a toy broomstick that he sent Harry for his first birthday. She writes that Bathilda came for birthday tea and that James is going stir crazy since Dumbledore has his Invisibility Cloak and he can't sneak out. The last half-sentence says that Bathilda shared something incredible about Dumbledore, but though Harry looks, he can't find the second page of the letter. He wonders why Dumbledore had the Invisibility Cloak.

Again, the letter gives Harry information that's useful and nice to have—Sirius clearly took his godfathering duties seriously and was a great gift-giver—but it raises more questions than it answers. The knowledge that Harry's parents and Bathilda Bagshot were friendly with each other, however, certainly makes Harry feel even more connected to Godric's Hollow.



Hermione shouts for Harry from downstairs, and she and Ron are angry and relieved to find him. She reads Lily's letter and then they discuss who ransacked the house. Harry suggests they go to Godric's Hollow to speak to Bathilda Bagshot, but Hermione points out that she can't help them with the Horcruxes. Harry shares what he heard at the wedding, but Hermione points out that Muriel and Rita Skeeter aren't trustworthy and tells him to not believe them. Harry thinks he still wants the truth. They start to leave for the kitchen, but on the landing, Harry stops in front of Sirius's brother's room and realizes that Regulus Arcturus Black is probably the R.A.B. from the locket. Hermione shouts for Ron.

Over the course of the series, Hermione has learned that she has to look at the context surrounding a piece of information before she can take it as fact, hence her advice to remember that Muriel and Skeeter are gossips and not trustworthy. Harry's desire for the truth, however, makes it more difficult to actually implement this advice and means that the odd things he's heard about Dumbledore begin to take on more significance, given Harry's emotional state.



The three step into the room, which is decorated with Slytherin hangings and the Black family crest. They spend an hour searching for the real locket with no success and then head downstairs. Hermione reminds Harry and Ron of all the horrible items they had to get rid of two years ago, but she stops dead when she remembers that they found a locket that none of them could open. Harry reasons that Kreacher could've stolen it, so they search his bedroom. Finally, Harry calls Kreacher and Kreacher appears in the kitchen. He forbids Kreacher from muttering insults and learns that Kreacher did steal the locket, but Mundungus Fletcher then stole "Master Regulus's locket." Harry stops Kreacher from punishing himself.

Crying, Kreacher says he saw Mundungus steal the locket. Harry asks Kreacher to tell them what Regulus has to do with the locket. Kreacher explains that Regulus joined the Death Eaters and, a year later, volunteered Kreacher to perform a task for Voldemort and then come home. Kreacher accompanied Voldemort to a cave by the sea and drank the potion in a basin. Voldemort left Kreacher on the island after covering the locket with more potion. The Inferi drug Kreacher under the water, but Kreacher followed orders and came home. Hermione and Ron note that elf magic is different than wizard magic, and Voldemort likely didn't consider that Kreacher would survive because of his magic.

A while later, Regulus asked Kreacher to take him to the cave. There, Regulus drank the potion and told Kreacher to switch the lockets, destroy the real one, and tell nobody. Kreacher sobs that he couldn't destroy the locket. Harry asks why Kreacher was willing to betray Sirius to Voldemort when Regulus died to bring Voldemort down. Hermione points out that Kreacher is loyal to people who are kind to him, which Sirius wasn't. She notes that Narcissa and Bellatrix certainly were, which is why he passed information to them. Harry gives Kreacher a moment and then asks him to find Mundungus so they can find the locket. Kreacher nods, but dissolves into tears when Harry presents him with the fake locket.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Harry is sure that Kreacher's mission will only take a few hours, but the elf isn't back by night. Ron notices two cloaked men waiting outside, and Hermione reasons that, if they knew that Harry was here, they'd have sent Snape in. She thinks that Snape has probably been here, but Moody's curse kept him from telling others how to get in. Hermione and Ron start bickering, so Harry excuses himself. In the hallway, someone lets himself in and Harry points his wand at the intruder. Hermione and Ron join him as Mrs. Black's portrait screams. Lupin announces himself and praises Harry for testing his identity. They head to the kitchen.

It's important to note that Harry recognizes that Kreacher is a possibly important source of information. This is something that the reader will later learn did not occur to Voldemort and, in the long run, keeps Voldemort from learning things that could be useful in achieving his goals. Harry's willingness to reach out to Kreacher shows that, at least in times like these, Harry recognizes that he has a wider community and is willing to call on others in times of need.



The cave that Kreacher mentions is clearly the cave where Dumbledore took Harry at the end of the last novel, so readers familiar with Half-Blood Prince will understand how amazing it is that Kreacher made it out of the cave alive. This is Harry's first clue that Voldemort doesn't care about tapping into the different kinds of magic and information that would be available to him from sources like Kreacher or other non-human beings.



The revelation that Regulus turned on Voldemort introduces Harry to the idea that not all of the Death Eaters are brainwashed and follow Voldemort blindly. Should Harry choose to internalize this story, this will help him see that it's possible that he has more allies on the other side than he might realize, while Kreacher's newfound loyalty to Harry suggests that Harry may have even more allies if he extends compassion and kindness to others he hasn't before.



At this point, Lupin exists somewhere between friend and mentor for the trio. While they're all adults now and while Lupin has no power over the trio, per se, in times like these, he can still step into the role of teacher and help them figure out how they should respond when a strange person enters Grimmauld Place. The fact that their relationship exists in this liminal space, however, continues to show that Harry and his friends haven't yet come of age completely.



Lupin is aghast to hear what happened on Tottenham Court Road. He doesn't think Harry has the Trace on him and explains that most of the wedding guests Disapparated before Death Eaters arrived. They seemed to not know that Harry was there, and Lupin says that Scrimgeour apparently died refusing to give away Harry's whereabouts. The Death Eaters searched every home connected to the Order and interrogated everyone—they now have the power to do whatever they want. He pushes a copy of the *Daily Prophet* at Harry. The headline reads that they want Harry for Dumbledore's murder. Lupin says that the coup was so quiet that nobody knows the truth, and blaming Harry makes people afraid that the resistance isn't legitimate.

Lupin says that the Ministry has also started to "survey" Muggle-borns and are rounding them up and accusing them of stealing magic. He explains that attendance at Hogwarts is now required, and all students must prove that they're descended from wizards before being allowed to attend. Lupin confirms that Harry is on a mission from Dumbledore, offers to accompany the trio, and insists he doesn't need to know what the mission is. Hermione asks about Tonks and Lupin says she's pregnant as though he's admitting something nasty. He says that Tonks will be safe with her parents.

Lupin insists that James would've wanted him to protect Harry, but Harry says that James would've wanted Lupin to stay with his baby. Harry and Lupin fight and Harry suggests that Lupin is abandoning his family and behaving like a coward. Lupin insists that he shouldn't have married Tonks and shouldn't have risked passing on his werewolfism to a child before cursing Harry and leaving. Both Ron and Hermione reprimand Harry, but Harry asks if it'll be worth it if Lupin goes back to Tonks.

Harry starts to flip through the *Prophet* that Lupin brought until he finds a photo of Dumbledore's family and an excerpt from Rita Skeeter's book. It talks about how Kendra moved the family to Godric's Hollow after Percival went to Azkaban and hid Ariana there. Many believe that Ariana was a Squib and that Kendra was ashamed of her. Harry feels horrible and wants to figure out how to confirm this.

Kreacher Apparates into the kitchen with a crack, bearing Mundungus. Hermione takes Mundungus's wand and Ron tackles the struggling man. Mundungus gives excuses for why he Disapparated during Harry's move, but Harry starts to ask about the locket. Kreacher hits Mundungus over the head with a saucepan, but Harry calls him off. Mundungus explains that he had to turn over the locket to a toad-like "Ministry hag" with a bow on her head when he was caught selling without a license. Harry realizes that the "hag" is Dolores Umbridge.

By creating this environment of fear and suspicion, Voldemort has effectively made it so that nobody who would resist him feels like they can safely do so, given that it seems as though even Harry isn't a trustworthy person. By fracturing the community, Voldemort also makes it harder for Harry to ask anyone for help, given that many people will likely suspect that the Prophet is correct and that Harry isn't on their side. With this, Voldemort preys on people's grief and loyalty to Dumbledore and turns Dumbledore's death into something that serves him.



By requiring attendance at Hogwarts, putting these conditions on who can attend, and dictating the kind of education that students will receive, Voldemort now has control over how students will grow up and learn to think about the culture in which they live. By doing this, it will be far easier for Voldemort to poison students' minds and bring them over to his side, as they have no choice but to attend or face imprisonment.



In this moment, Harry steps into an adult role to chastise Lupin. Harry's reaction is certainly rooted in the fact that Harry grew up without parents and believes that children should have their parents if possible, especially when the few father-like mentors that Harry had were with him for such a short time.



That Kendra was possibly ashamed of Ariana being a Squib reminds the reader that the kind of intolerance that Voldemort promotes isn't something new; if this story is true, Voldemort is just a horrendous and extreme incarnation of something that's been plaguing the Wizarding world for decades.



Hitting Mundungus with the pan shows that Kreacher's loyalties have truly shifted since Harry showed Kreacher respect and kindness. With this, Harry is reminded that all of his actions have major consequences. Just as Sirius's thoughtless indifference to Kreacher cost him his life, Harry's respect for Kreacher now might have even more meaningful results.



CHAPTER TWELVE

For the next month, Death Eaters keep watch outside of Grimmauld Place. Harry Apparates onto the front step, nearly losing his balance, and lets himself in. Kreacher is now clean and has turned out to be a fantastic cook. Harry tosses the *Daily Prophet* he stole at Ron and Hermione. It reads that Snape is now the headmaster of Hogwarts. The article says that Alecto Carrow is teaching Muggle Studies and her brother, Amycus, is teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts. With a shriek, Hermione rushes off. Ron and Harry discuss that McGonagall, Flitwick, and Sprout will probably stay to protect the students.

Hermione returns with Phineas Nigellus's portrait and stuffs it in her beaded purse. A former Hogwarts headmaster, Phineas could use his portrait to spy on them for Snape. Harry explains that he watched the Ministry entrance for seven hours and didn't see Umbridge, but did see Mr. Weasley. Hermione asks about the two people they've been spying on and when Ron says that the one man works in Maintenance because of his blue robes, Hermione shouts at him for not telling her that *all* Maintenance workers wear blue robes. Harry interrupts and says they should break in tomorrow.

They argue about who should or shouldn't go. Harry's scar starts to burn and he excuses himself to the bathroom. As Voldemort, he sees himself knocking on a door and asking a woman for Gregorovitch. The woman insists he's not there and Voldemort kills her and her children. Harry comes to and hears Hermione pounding on the door. He lets her in and recounts what he saw. Hermione immediately chastises Harry for not practicing Occlumency and asks if he likes this connection, but Harry angrily says that he's going to use it to figure out why Voldemort wants Gregorovitch. Hermione desperately insists that Harry's wand didn't act of its own accord and Ron suggests they go over their plan.

They only get a few hours of sleep and then, after breakfast, Kreacher shows them out the door and promises to have dinner ready when they get back. They Disapparate under the cloak together and then hide in an alley. A minute later, a small witch Apparates near them. Hermione stuns her and they carry the witch, Mafalda Hopkirk, into the alley and into an old theater. Hermione uses Polyjuice Potion and transforms into Mafalda. A minute later, Hermione (as Mafalda) greets the man from Magical Maintenance and aggressively offers him a Puking Pastille. She grabs some hair and sends him to St. Mungo's after Ron snatches his bag. Ron drinks the Polyjuice Potion and turns into Reg Cattermole.

Now that Snape and the Death Eaters are in charge of Hogwarts, Harry, Ron, and Hermione have lost a major source of allies and a sense of safety. Understanding that Hogwarts is no longer safe means that the trio is now forced to look outside the school for allies and for help, and this continues to catapult them into coming of age and becoming independent from their parents and the school that raised them.



That it's taken them a month to come up with a plan to infiltrate the Ministry shows that now the trio understands the absolute necessity of gathering information and taking the time to properly plan, concepts that, in previous novels, have been lost on them or difficult for them to understand. They'll soon realize that they didn't do quite enough planning, however, showing that, though they're on their way to understanding that knowledge is power, they're not all the way there yet.



Harry insisting that he's going to use the connection is an attempt to get Hermione to back off, and it's a point in which Harry asserts his independence and his adulthood, and his right to make his own decisions. Now that he's not being directly mentored by Dumbledore, Harry can pick and choose what of Dumbledore's advice he thinks is valuable and which he thinks is silly, something that will ultimately help him come of age.



The fact that the trio are using Fred and George's joke merchandise again reminds the reader that there are a variety of different ways to make it in the Wizarding world, and that the knowledge that the twins have to create these products is just as useful as anything else. The trio's willingness to use these products shows that they're beginning to take this idea to heart, while Voldemort continues to focus only on those things that interest him and seem powerful.



Hermione and Ron accost another man with Nosebleed Nougat and give his hair to Harry. Harry transforms into a tall, powerful man and the trio head for the public toilet to flush themselves in. In the Atrium, Harry notices that the golden fountain is gone. In its place is a huge statue of a witch and wizard sitting on thrones made of naked Muggles. It reads, "Magic is Might." The trio joins the throng moving to the golden elevators as Yaxley shouts at Reg to fix the rain in his office. He says that he's going to interrogate Mrs. Cattermole, and if Reg wants her to live, he should fix his office.

The idea of "Magic is Might" falls in neatly with how Voldemort conceptualizes knowledge and power: namely, that magic is the most powerful thing there is, as far as he's concerned. He doesn't believe that Muggles know anything worth knowing, and that simply possessing magic makes a person superior. This represents an exceedingly narrow view of humanity, and shows where Voldemort is blind to nuance.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione get into an elevator alone and Hermione gives Ron some options for how to fix the rain. A man gets in, calls Harry Albert, and compliments him on getting rid of Dirk Cresswell. Ron and the other wizard get off on the second level. When the gates open on the first level, Harry and Hermione come face to face with Umbridge and Pius Thicknesse.

What others say to Harry tell him that Albert Runcorn, whom he's impersonating, is powerful, imposing, and sympathetic to the Death Eaters—something that, should Harry choose to use it, means that he might have the power to create change while in his disguise.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Umbridge is thrilled to see Mafalda and takes Hermione downstairs to take notes on the hearings. Harry gets out of the elevator, tells Thicknesse he's on this floor to speak with Mr. Weasley, and pulls out the Cloak as soon as he's alone. He begins to panic, thinking that they never made a plan in the event that they got split up. Harry decides to look for Umbridge's office on the off chance the locket is in it. He comes upon a room of young wizards and witches assembling pamphlets with information about the dangers of Mudbloods. Harry notices that Moody's eye is installed in Umbridge's office door so she can spy on the employees.

Harry recognizes that, while they spent lots of time planning a best-case scenario, they neglected to come up with a worst-case scenario plan—which means that now their planning is mostly useless, and they're going to have to go on skill, instinct, and the bits of information they do have. In other words, they now have to rely on a combination of knowledge and power, rather than focusing mostly on the things that they know.



Harry pulls out a Decoy Detonator, which scuttles away and starts emitting smoke across the room. He slips into Umbridge's office and pockets Moody's eye. He begins going through a filing cabinet and stops short when he finds Mr. Weasley's file, which reads that the family is being tracked in case "Undesirable No. 1" makes contact. Harry also notices Rita Skeeter's biography of Dumbledore on the desk and opens the book randomly to a photograph of young Dumbledore laughing arm in arm with a golden-haired young man. Thicknesse lets himself in and as he writes a note, Harry slips out.

Discovering Rita Skeeter's biography here reminds Harry of his doubts about Dumbledore, which (thanks to his focus on planning) he's likely been able to ignore for the last month. Bringing them back to the surface reminds Harry that he will still have to figure out how to come to terms with Dumbledore's legacy in a way that allows him to move forward and retain respect for his former mentor.



Deciding they need to leave and come back another day, Harry runs to the elevators. Ron gets in at the next floor and barely recognizes Harry, and on the next floor, Mr. Weasley and an old witch get in. He glares at Albert Runcorn with disgust and then addresses Reg, kindly suggesting a spell to use on Yaxley's raining office. Ron gets out and Percy steps in, only noticing that Mr. Weasley is there after the doors close. Percy gets out on the next floor, at which point Arthur angrily calls Runcorn out for putting Dirk Cresswell in Azkaban, but Harry cuts Mr. Weasley off and tells him he's being followed. Mr. Weasley gets out in the Atrium.

Harry puts on his Cloak and takes the elevator down to the courtrooms. As he tries to figure out if Runcorn has enough power to pull Mafalda out, he realizes that the hallway is filled with dementors guarding Muggle-borns. Knowing he can't conjure a Patronus without giving up his identity, he thinks of Ron and Hermione. A door opens and a screaming man emerges. At Umbridge's command, dementors take him away. Umbridge calls Mrs. Cattermole, and Harry slips into the room behind her. Umbridge, Yaxley, and Mafalda sit above a platform, while Umbridge's cat Patronus protects them from the despair coming from the surrounding dementors.

Harry sneaks up behind Hermione and whispers to her that he's there as Umbridge asks Mrs. Cattermole who she took her wand from. As Umbridge leans forward, Harry sees the locket around her neck. She asks for a form from Hermione and Hermione compliments the locket. Umbridge says it's a Selwyn family heirloom. Harry Stuns Umbridge and Yaxley. He casts a Patronus to protect Mrs. Cattermole from the dementors as Hermione replicates the locket and takes the Horcrux. She conjures a Patronus to accompany them out and Harry tells Mrs. Cattermole to take her children and run. In the hallway, Harry tells the Muggle-borns that the new official position is that they should go into hiding and tells them to follow the Patronuses.

At the elevators, Mrs. Cattermole throws herself at Reg/Ron. Ron tells Harry that the Ministry knows they're here. They and the Muggle-borns squeeze into two elevators and, at the Atrium, Harry uses Runcorn's power to command employees to stop sealing off Floo fireplaces. Harry threatens one man who contradicts him as the real Reg appears. When Yaxley approaches, Harry tries to bluster and deflect blame. Yaxley chases them out to the public toilet and Harry tries to Apparate with Ron and Hermione. It feels wrong, but they arrive at Grimmauld Place. Suddenly, Hermione Apparates with them again.

Here, Harry chooses to use the power afforded to him by Albert Runcorn to do something good and warn Mr. Weasley that the family is being followed—though this also puts Harry's disguise in question if Mr. Weasley chooses to question this further. This shows that doing the right thing could have all manner of consequences, good and bad, and that Harry is going to have to decide how to wield the power he's borrowing.



Seeing Umbridge like this shows Harry that, like Voldemort, Umbridge is only interested in power for power's sake—given what the reader and Harry know of Umbridge, these trials are a joke and aren't actually giving her any useful information; they're a way to intimidate people and feel powerful. With this, Harry is able to get an inside look at how a person like Umbridge can abuse power and align themselves with someone like Voldemort, even if they're not entirely a Death Eater.



Now, Harry can use his power as Albert Runcorn to do even more good and hopefully, help these people get away and be safe. All the magic that Hermione and Harry perform here shows that all of what they learned at Hogwarts is now serving them very well in the real world. This suggests that, under good management and guidance—as the school was with Dumbledore—schools can prepare students to engage with revolutions and can give them the tools to think critically and fight evil.



Just as when the trio escaped from the wedding, it takes all three of them performing important and different tasks in order to effectively escape from the Ministry. This impresses upon Harry once again that he couldn't do this alone; he needs Hermione and Ron in order to accomplish these tasks and will ultimately need to call on his wider community to truly emerge victorious.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Harry emerges in a forest, lying next to Ron and Hermione. Ron is drenched in blood and Hermione whispers that he got Splinched. Tears in her eyes, Hermione says that Yaxley grabbed her as they Disapparated, and he saw the door of Grimmauld Place—he can now enter. Harry pulls out Moody's eye. Ron wakes up and they decide to stay put. Hermione begins working protective charms while Harry pulls a tent from Hermione's bag. Hermione begins to say that her charms should keep Voldemort away, but Ron cuts her off before she can say the name and asks that they call him You-Know-Who.

Harry and Hermione carry Ron inside and put him in bed. They discuss whether Reg and Mrs. Cattermole got away and then Hermione pulls out the Horcrux. Ron examines the egg-size locket, and Hermione says she's sure it's still a Horcrux. They all try to open it with no success, but Ron points out that he can feel a tiny heart beating in it. Harry puts it on and then steps outside to keep watch. Dinner is a sad affair and Harry is extremely hungry. He doesn't feel happy that they got the Horcrux and he begins to think horrible, exhausted thoughts. His scar prickles and he feels awful for Kreacher.

As he thinks that Lupin was right to offer help, Harry falls into Voldemort's mind. Voldemort asks Gregorovitch to give him "it" while he dangles the man upside-down. Gregorovitch says that someone stole it from him. Voldemort bores into Gregorovitch's mind and sees a golden-haired young man jumping out of his window. Gregorovitch insists he doesn't know who the thief is as Harry returns to himself. Hermione reprimands him for not practicing Occlumency and sends him inside to sleep. Harry tells Ron what he saw. Harry recognizes the golden-haired man, but he doesn't understand why Voldemort killed Gregorovitch without asking him about wandlore.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Early the next morning, Harry buries Moody's eye under a tree. Later, they decide to move on. They camp near a village where Harry can grab food, but he returns from his quest panting and explains that the village was teeming with dementors and he couldn't make a Patronus. Ron is furious that they don't have food, but Hermione interrupts his ranting and tells Harry to take off the Horcrux. As soon as Harry does, he feels light and free. He insists he wasn't possessed, but still believes that they need to wear the locket for safekeeping. They decide to take turns wearing it.

At this point, Ron's discomfort with saying Voldemort's name reads as a reflection of the dangerous and uncomfortable spot the trio have found themselves in—they could've ended up in Voldemort's clutches easily had their infiltration gone any worse, and Voldemort seems even more threatening. However, it's worth keeping in mind that while Hermione and Harry think Ron is being silly, Ron has the right idea—saying the name alerts the Ministry—showing how Voldemort abuses fear for his own gain.



Having a piece of Voldemort with them certainly doesn't help the trio's sense of safety, which continues to suggest that immortality through Horcruxes doesn't really help anyone who wants to be actually human (which Voldemort, notably, doesn't want, but which the trio does want). The evil that accompanies the Horcrux begins to poison Harry's thoughts even more than his questions about Dumbledore, suggesting that this is even worse than Harry's doubt.



Harry's question of why Voldemort killed Gregorovitch without asking more questions shows that, at this point, Harry still thinks that he and Voldemort are both out for more information about wands—something that Voldemort has actually abandoned after his first brush with Harry, when it turned out that Ollivander didn't have correct information. This shows that Harry is now in a better place, as he's the only one still searching for information.



It's important to keep in mind that, because they're on the run and don't want to endanger any of their other friends by reaching out, Harry, Ron, and Hermione are now the only social contact that they have—a situation that, in the long run, is untenable. That the Horcrux makes them irritable and less accomplished continues to drive home that the immortality it represents is in direct opposition to life and friendship.



The trio moves to a field and Hermione steals eggs and bread from the nearby farm. They discover that eating well means their journey is bearable, while Ron becomes unreasonable when there's no food. Ron constantly asks where they're going next and broods over their food situation while Harry and Hermione list the places where Voldemort might have hidden Horcruxes. Ron continues to be snappy about using Voldemort's name, and Harry continually insists that Voldemort hid one at Hogwarts. Harry knows it was an important location for Voldemort, but Ron disagrees.

Harry's scar keeps prickling. Though he shares with Ron that he continues to see the thief that stole from Gregorovitch, Ron is disappointed that Harry can't see anything else. Harry begins to suspect that Ron and Hermione talk about him when he's not nearby, and he wonders why they came in the first place. Ron is constantly angry, and Hermione seems disappointed. As the fall wears on, Ron's mood continues to worsen. One night, he insists that Mrs. Weasley can make food appear from nowhere, which Hermione explains is impossible. They begin to shout at each other until Harry tells them to stop—he hears someone.

They quietly listen to what sounds like several people climbing down toward the riverbank. Hermione pulls out Extendable Ears and hands one each to Ron and Harry. The newcomers catch salmon, and Harry hears a language he doesn't recognize. They discover that there are two goblins, Griphook and Gornuk, in addition to Ted Tonks, Dirk Cresswell, and Dean Thomas. Ted asks the goblins why they're on the run, as he thought the goblins supported Voldemort. The goblins explain that they don't take sides, but they were asked to do things that were below them and that Gringotts isn't under goblin control anymore.

Griphook laughs and makes a joke in Gobbledegook. Dirk and Ted discuss that, at Hogwarts, Ginny and some friends tried to steal the sword of Gryffindor from Snape's office, so he sent it to Gringotts. Griphook laughs and says the sword is a copy, and then says indifferently that the students were punished. They discuss whether or not Snape killed Dumbledore, and both Dean and Ted defend Harry and tell Dirk to read the *Quibbler* to get the facts. A few minutes later, the party moves away.

Ron's behavior in particular continues to drive home that only ever seeing two people isn't going to work out long-term: at some point, the trio will need to make contact with others if they want to accomplish their goal. Harry's sense that Voldemort hid a Horcrux at Hogwarts suggests that he understands that Hogwarts is a place where misfit children can find a home; it would represent belonging for Voldemort, just as it does for Harry.



As the weeks wear on, all three of them become increasingly testy and vulnerable to attacks from each other—another consequence of being each other's only contact with other people. That Ron has such a difficult time makes it clear that this journey isn't at all straightforward and simple; it's one in which Ron will have to make peace with the lack of solid information, just like Harry is trying to do with Dumbledore.



The fact that Gringotts is now presumably controlled by the Death Eaters shows the trio that Voldemort seeks to subjugate everyone in the magical community, not just Muggle-borns and Muggles themselves. This does suggest that, while Voldemort might think little of house-elves, he does recognize that goblins aren't beings to mess with—they should be subjugated, not ignored.



Learning that Ginny tried to steal the sword shows Harry that the resistance movement is still alive and well at Hogwarts, something that likely makes Harry feel less alone. This will be one of Harry's early indicators that he needs to expand his community and let others in; doing so gives him hope, a necessary ingredient as he continues along.



Hermione digs Phineas's portrait out of her bag, reasoning that he might've seen someone swap the swords. As soon as he appears in his portrait, she blindfolds him. He's incensed, but he reveals that Neville and Luna helped Ginny, and that all three served detention in the Forbidden Forest with Hagrid. Hermione asks if the sword has been taken away for cleaning, but Phineas laughs at her and says that goblin-made weapons absorb things that make them stronger and repel dirt. He starts to leave and says that he last saw the sword out of its case when Dumbledore used it to break a ring.

Harry and Hermione celebrate as Hermione shoves the portrait back into her purse. They deduce that Dumbledore planned to use the sword on the locket, but they wonder where Dumbledore hid the real sword. Harry turns to Ron for an opinion, but Ron meanly says he doesn't want to spoil their fun. He spits that he's cold, hungry, and feels like they're not accomplishing anything. He insists that Hermione is disappointed too and Harry tells Ron to go home if he's finished. They draw wands, but Hermione conjures a shield between them. Ron throws off the Horcrux, accuses Hermione of choosing Harry, and storms off. Hermione tries to chase him, but he Disapparates.

Drawing on Phineas shows that Hermione is beginning to put together that she needs to pull from a variety of sources as she figures out what's happening and how things function; this is especially important given that Phineas is a Slytherin headmaster and, therefore, is, according to Harry, less likely to want to help a Gryffindor overthrow the current Slytherin headmaster.



As far as Ron is concerned, having the information that they need the sword to destroy the Horcruxes isn't actually useful when they have no idea where the sword itself actually is. Again, the fact that he feels this way when he's wearing the Horcrux shows how being so close to this poor attempt at immortality makes Ron less interested in actually living and making his own life and the lives of others better by trying to figure out how they can get the sword.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The next morning, Harry and Hermione eat and dress silently. They dawdle as they pack up, hoping Ron will return, but they finally Disapparate. When they arrive on a hillside, Hermione sits down and sobs. Harry performs the protective spells, seeing Ron's seething face in his mind. They don't mention Ron, though Hermione cries at night. Harry begins poring over the Marauder's Map, looking for Ron at Hogwarts. He never shows up, so Harry fixates on Ginny's dot. They discuss where Dumbledore might have hidden the sword, but Harry keeps thinking that Ron was right: Harry has no idea what to do, since Dumbledore left him so little information.

Hermione brings out Phineas's portrait at night, and he visits every few days. He's touchy about perceived insults to Snape, but reveals that Ginny and possibly Neville and Luna are continuing Dumbledore's Army. Harry feels homesick for Ginny and for Hogwarts. He wishes he could go to Hogwarts and join the resistance to Snape, as well as have food and a warm bed.

Harry's willingness and ability to perform the protective spells around the campsite reinforces the novel's assertion that it takes a variety of people to carry out a quest like this; Hermione can't be expected to be the only one to perform these spells the entire time. Now that she's grieving for Ron's loss, Harry can step in and do her the kindness of letting her grieve and not worry about whether or not they're going to be safe.



The desire to return to Hogwarts and join in the resistance shows that Harry is struggling with his new adult status. Hogwarts represents a safe and comfortable childhood, and he desperately wants to return to that—an understandable desire, given how hard things are on the run.



One evening, after a good meal, Harry suggests that they go to Godric's Hollow. Hermione doesn't hear him at first and asks him to help her with a symbol in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* that someone wrote in. Harry looks at it and says it's Grindelwald's mark. Hermione is flabbergasted, especially since she hasn't read anywhere that Grindelwald *had* a mark. She finally hears Harry's request to go to Godric's Hollow and surprises him by agreeing. She suggests that Dumbledore might've left the sword there, since he'd know that Harry would want to go there and since it's Godric Gryffindor's birthplace. Harry thinks that the draw of Godric's Hollow is his parents' graves, their house, and Bathilda Bagshot. He mentions that Bagshot still lives there, and Hermione gasps and wonders if she has the sword.

Harry doesn't think this is likely, but he expresses support since it'll get him to Godric's Hollow. Hermione begins to plan and Harry daydreams about the life he might've had in Godric's Hollow. He looks through his photo album that night and, a week later, they Apparate to Godric's Hollow, disguised as an older Muggle couple. They arrive under the Cloak to find snow, so Harry suggests that they ditch the Cloak since they're in disguise. Harry looks at the houses, wondering which one was his, until they reach the square. There's a war memorial in the middle and a service going on in the church. Hermione thinks it's Christmas Eve.

As they start across the square, the memorial transforms into a sculpture of James, Lily, and baby Harry. They continue to the graveyard and start to look through the headstones. Hermione finds Kendra and Ariana's graves, and Harry thinks that Rita Skeeter and Muriel were right about something. Harry feels betrayed and thinks that he and Dumbledore could've come together to the graveyard. He continues on, but returns when Hermione finds a headstone with the symbol from her book on it. A few minutes later, she finds Lily and James's graves. Harry is disturbed to see "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" on the stone, as he thought it was a Death Eater idea. Hermione comforts him, conjures a wreath of roses, and leads him to the gate.

It's telling that Hermione hasn't heard that Grindelwald had a mark; though it's entirely possible that Krum could be correct and that Hermione, being a UK-educated witch, isn't aware of the international implications of the symbol. It's also possible that Krum is wrong. That Harry thinks it's unlikely that the sword is with Bathilda (and that Hermione does) speaks to Hermione's desire for help and a greater sense of community on this quest—something that at this point, arises in the form of Bathilda Bagshot.



Harry's interest in Godric's Hollow has to do with making sense of the dead and trying to answer questions that he can't actually answer, such as what his life might've been like had his parents survived, or what Dumbledore's childhood in Godric's Hollow was like. In other words, Harry is still fixated on information that he can't actually find, no matter what he does. This is a product of his youth and of his unwillingness to look forward and deal with Dumbledore's legacy rather than Dumbledore's past.



Again, it's telling that Harry feels so betrayed when he simply confirms that Dumbledore's family lived here; it continues to suggest that Harry is still misguidedly intent on fact-checking Rita Skeeter—someone who he knows doesn't write the truth unless she's forced to do so. The writing on James and Lily's gravestone starts to prepare Harry for his later sacrifice, as one of the things that makes death an enemy is the fact that people fear it so much—which, in Harry's sacrifice, he has to push away in order to be successful.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Halfway to the gate, Hermione stops Harry and says that there's someone watching them. Harry insists it's a cat, since they'd be dead if it were a Death Eater, and they throw the Cloak on. Hermione leads them down a dark lane and Harry stops dead when he sees what must've been his parents' house. He touches the gate and a sign appears, reading that the house has been left a ruin as a monument to Harry, James, and Lily. Harry reads graffiti on the sign wishing him luck. The happiness Harry feels disappears when he notices a small woman approaching. She stops and stares at the ruin, and Harry feels like she knows he and Hermione are there.

The woman beckons to them, and Harry asks if she's Bathilda. She nods. They begin to follow her down the lane and into a cottage that smells horrible. When Harry looks at her, he sees that she's tiny and ancient, with cataracts and mottled skin. She goes into the sitting room and Harry feels the locket pulsing. Hermione whispers that this doesn't seem right, but Harry insists that Bathilda is just old. In the sitting room, Harry smells bad meat in addition to mildew. He helps Bathilda light candles and sees that many photos are missing from their frames. Harry notices one of the young man who stole from Gregorovitch and asks Bathilda who he is, but she says nothing.

Bathilda motions for Harry to go upstairs with her and shakes her head when Hermione moves to come too. Though Hermione is nervous, she stays downstairs while Harry follows Bathilda, slipping the photograph into his coat as he leaves. In an upstairs bedroom, Bathilda closes the door and in the time it takes Harry to light his wand, she quietly moves very close to him. She asks if he's Harry and doesn't answer when Harry asks if she has something for him. Suddenly, the Horcrux twitches, Harry's scar burns, and he hears Voldemort say, "Hold him." As Harry looks away from Bathilda, Nagini pours out of Bathilda's body.

Nagini bites Harry, knocks him to the floor, and begins to coil around him. Harry goes back and forth between his reality and Voldemort flying in his direction as he and Hermione battle with Nagini. Hermione explodes the room and Harry pulls her out the window, screaming with pain and Voldemort's rage as he and Hermione Disapparate. As Voldemort, Harry walks through the village, scowling at children dressed as pumpkins, and sees James and Lily playing with baby Harry through the window. James doesn't have his wand and Voldemort kills him immediately. He follows Lily upstairs and kills her as she places herself between Voldemort and Harry. As Voldemort directs his killing curse at Harry's face, he blows apart and screams in pain.

Harry's happiness at seeing written support from others continues to remind him that he needs to be aware that he has a larger community and that he needs to draw on them, as it not only makes it more likely that he'll have access to the right information, it'll also give him hope. The ruined house also serves as a reminder to passersby that the cost of standing up to Voldemort is high, but their support for Harry suggests that they see it as worth it.



The pulsing locket and the horrible smell should serve as warnings that this is a dangerous location; Harry's willingness to take note and then ignore it continues to illustrate how intent he is on figuring out the things he cares about most, and that he's not necessarily interested in figuring out the information that he needs.



In this moment, Harry learns that Hermione has been correct all along: Godric's Hollow was a trap. This, in retrospect, will show Harry that he needs to take his friends' instincts seriously, as they can bring new perspectives and ways of understanding what's going on to the table in ways that, if he takes them seriously, can ultimately protect them all.



It's unclear in this instance if Voldemort is using his connection with Harry to purposefully show him this memory, or if it's just a matter of Voldemort reliving one of his worst memories and Harry being along for the ride. Regardless, seeing his parents' deaths allows Harry to see again that they sacrificed for him in senseless ways (given that James didn't have his wand to try to defend himself) but also how cruel and unfeeling Voldemort was and still is.



Harry, still moving between himself and Voldemort, sees Voldemort pick up the photo of the thief that he dropped as Hermione wakes him up. It's nearly morning, and he can see that Hermione has been wiping his face. She explains that he's been unwell and shouting, and that she had to use a Severing Charm to get the Horcrux off of his chest. Harry apologizes for insisting on going to Godric's Hollow and tells Hermione that Nagini was inside Bathilda's long-dead body. He sits up, insists on keeping watch, and asks for his wand. Hermione begins to cry and offers Harry his broken wand. She dutifully mends it, but it falls apart when Harry tries a spell. Harry is aghast. He borrows Hermione's wand.

For Harry, his wand has been a symbol of belonging to the magical world—not having it makes him feel as though he's cut off from his community and, indeed, cut off from the most important and powerful part of himself. However, it's also worth noting that while Harry loses his physical might when he loses his wand, he doesn't lose his mind—he still can, if he so chooses, figure out what he needs to do and rely on his wider community for the wherewithal to do it.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Harry sits outside and watches the sunrise. He thinks he should be glad to be alive, but he feels naked and powerless without his wand. He realizes he'd been counting on the protection of the twin cores and places his wand in the moleskin pouch. Harry feels suddenly furious at Dumbledore for not leaving him more clues. Hermione nervously interrupts Harry with tea and asks if she can sit. Not wanting to hurt her feelings, he allows her to stay. She gives him *The Life and Lies of Albus Dumbledore*, which she stole from Bathilda's house. Harry feels angry seeing Dumbledore's photo, but Hermione asks if he's angry at her. Harry insists he's not; he'd be dead without her.

Harry's recognition that he'd be dead without Hermione shows that he's beginning to take it to heart that he needs to rely on his friends and his community if he wants to make it through this ordeal alive. Possessing Skeeter's biography means that Harry and Hermione can at least read what Skeeter has to say, though they'll need to be careful to read critically and remember that Skeeter isn't a trustworthy part of their community.



Harry finds the copy of the photo in the book and both he and Hermione gasp at the caption: the man is Grindelwald, Dumbledore's "friend." They find the corresponding chapter and read about how Dumbledore returned home after Kendra's death to care for Aberforth and Ariana. Rita Skeeter writes that thanks to Veritaserum, she was able to interview Bathilda Bagshot, who was friendly with Dumbledore. Bathilda spilled how Grindelwald, her great-nephew, came to visit that summer. He'd already been expelled from Durmstrang for his interest in the Dark Arts, and the two young men became great friends. Skeeter transcribes a letter from young Dumbledore to Grindelwald, expressing interest in wizards taking control "for the Muggles' own good," and suggests that Dumbledore was flirting with world domination instead of caring for his family.

That Skeeter transcribes a letter from Dumbledore (something Harry and Hermione confirm, as she reproduces the letter as a photo) makes it even more shocking for Harry to learn this about Dumbledore—it's not coming from Skeeter; it's coming from Dumbledore himself. The fact that Dumbledore and Grindelwald were once friends doesn't just suggest that Dumbledore had questionable ideas as a young person, as it also leaves space for the possibility that there was some good in Grindelwald that Dumbledore saw and was attracted to.



Two months later, Ariana died, Grindelwald decided to go home, and Aberforth blamed Dumbledore for Ariana's death. There was a fight between the brothers at the funeral, and Skeeter wonders why Aberforth was so upset. Dumbledore delayed his duel with Grindelwald for five years, possibly because of their friendship, and Skeeter suggests that Ariana was the first to die "for the greater good." Hermione pulls the book away, closes it, and reminds Harry that this is Skeeter's writing. Harry, however, feels betrayed by Dumbledore and like he's lost everyone. Hermione admits that it's awful that Dumbledore seems to have given Grindelwald the idea for his slogan, "for the greater good," but Dumbledore was young. Harry spits that *they're* young, but they're fighting Voldemort instead of plotting to subjugate Muggles.

Hermione suggests that Dumbledore was alone and grieving, and when Harry says that he was keeping "his Squib sister" locked up, Hermione firmly says that she doesn't think Ariana was a Squib. She insists that Dumbledore changed and dedicated his life to fighting for good. She thinks Harry is upset because Dumbledore never shared this with him. Harry bellows that he is angry that Dumbledore didn't trust him enough to tell him the truth. Hermione whispers that Dumbledore loved Harry, which Harry refutes. He dismisses Hermione and wishes that she were right about Dumbledore.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Hermione takes over the watch at midnight. Harry's dreams are disturbing, so he gets up and suggests they move on. Hermione is thrilled to go somewhere more sheltered from the snow, and she notes that she keeps hearing people outside their protections. Harry stares at the silent Sneakoscope and they decide to Disapparate under the Cloak. They arrive in the Forest of Dean and Hermione sets up the tent. They remain for two days while Harry recovers from his brush with Voldemort, who seems somehow closer now. Harry insists on taking the night watch and tries hard to stay awake. A bright silver doe walks out of the trees, gazes at him, and then turns and walks away.

While Harry certainly has a point, it's also worth considering that he's growing up in a wildly different time and place than Dumbledore did—when Dumbledore was their age, Voldemort wasn't even born yet and Grindelwald wasn't yet the tyrant he later became. Harry's quest for good, in other words, is one that has come out of necessity—necessity that didn't spur Dumbledore to action until danger arose in his own time. That Hermione seems to accept this shows that she believes Dumbledore's later choices matter more than this youthful indiscretion.



Hermione's beliefs and suspicions reveal what Harry's true problem is: that it seems as though Dumbledore chose to keep important secrets from Harry, something that means that Harry will never be able to truly conceptualize Dumbledore's entire life and, instead, means that all Harry has to go on is questionable testimony and his own memories, which now seem tainted.



Voldemort feels closer because, on some level, both Hermione and Harry feel betrayed: Godric's Hollow was, in both of their minds, supposed to hold answers and yet, all they got was Voldemort. This sense suggests that Harry did expect too much from finding his parents' graves, and it suggests that he wanted answers from the dead—when graves exist more for the living to find peace and a sense of comfort, not for the dead themselves.



Harry hesitates and then follows the doe. The doe suddenly disappears and Harry lights his wand. There's nothing alarming around him, but he notices a frozen pond with the sword of Gryffindor lying at the bottom. Harry wonders how he, the sword, and the doe all converged on this place. He tries to Summon the sword, asks for help, and sighs when he decides he has to dive for it. Harry strips to his underwear, blows a hole in the ice, and wades in. He dives down but as soon as he grabs the sword, the chain of the Horcrux tightens around his neck. He loses consciousness and then comes to on the bank, the Horcrux off of his neck. Ron asks Harry incredulously why he didn't take the Horcrux off first.

Harry dresses and stares at Ron, wondering if he's real. Ron says he didn't cast the doe; he thought it was Harry's Patronus. Ron says he's back if Harry wants him, and then offers the sword to Harry. He explains that he'd been looking for them in the forest for a while when he saw Harry following the doe. Ron points to where he thought he saw something move and Harry inspects the spot, but there's nothing there. They decide that whoever cast the Patronus put the sword in the pond, and they decide to destroy the Horcrux immediately.

Harry leads Ron to a flat stone and insists that Ron destroy the Horcrux. He somehow knows that Ron needs to do it, but Ron refuses. Ron finally agrees and Harry asks the locket to open in Parseltongue. It swings open to reveal an eye. Ron prepares to stab it, but it begins to speak to Ron, telling him in Harry and Hermione's voices that nobody likes him, that he's stupid, and that even Mrs. Weasley likes Harry better. It says that Hermione loves Harry. Harry shouts for Ron to stab and sees a glint of red in Ron's eyes. Ron brings the sword down and Harry whirls away. When he looks back, Ron is crying but the locket is destroyed.

Harry quietly says that he loves Hermione like a sister and that they barely spoke while Ron was gone. Ron apologizes for leaving, they hug, and they head for the tent. Harry excitedly wakes Hermione, who approaches Ron and then begins punching and shouting at him. Harry conjures a shield between them as Hermione continues to shout at Ron. When she runs out of steam, Ron says that he wanted to come back as soon as he'd left, but he ran into Snatchers, gangs out to catch Muggle-borns for money. He managed to get away, but Harry and Hermione had already left when he returned to their campsite. Hermione spits that they ran into Voldemort and Nagini, ignoring Harry saying that Ron saved his life.

The doe and discovering the sword—as well as Ron's reappearance—make it clear that someone out there is helping the trio figure things out. This shows Harry that he needs to continue to trust his greater community to help him, even when he doesn't explicitly ask for it. Saving Harry from the murderous Horcrux allows Ron to begin to redeem himself (in addition to the act of returning to his friends being somewhat redemptive). Ron can now hope to define himself in terms of his choice to return, not his choice to leave.



Though Harry and Hermione's suspicions about someone in the woods was clearly founded, given that they likely heard Ron, it's telling that this "intruder" turned out to be a friend. With this, the trio continues to acquire evidence that they possibly don't need to be so suspicious, and that there's help out there if they're willing to look for it.



Allowing Ron to stab the Horcrux will allow Ron to feel again like he's a useful and knowledgeable member of the trio. This is essentially a confidence building exercise for him, in which Ron is forced to face his demons in the Horcrux and choose to either listen to the Horcrux—and choose evil—or destroy it and choose his friends and the quest to kill Voldemort.



Hermione's reaction isn't unfounded—she needs to be able to trust Ron and believe that he's going to be there for them, something that he called into question when he left. However, Ron's choice to return suggests that he's more dedicated to their quest than Hermione might think. Now, the onus is on Hermione to choose to forgive Ron and accept him back into the fold, something that would allow her to demonstrate her maturity and acknowledge Ron's goodwill.



Hermione asks how Ron found them and Ron pulls out the Deluminator. He explains that, on Christmas, he heard Hermione's voice coming out of the Deluminator, and a ball of light appeared, floated inside of him, and he knew where to Apparate to. This is how he found them in this spot, and he and Harry tell her about the doe and destroying the Horcrux. Hermione inspects the Horcrux while Ron gives Harry an extra wand he stole from the Snatchers. Hermione climbs into bed and ignores Ron.

Ron's journey to come back to his friends shows that Dumbledore certainly believed in redemption—he gave Ron something that would allow him to redeem himself, should Ron decide to do something silly like leave. That Harry accepts Ron back so easily suggests that he understands this, and that he understands the power of giving Ron a second chance.



CHAPTER TWENTY

Hermione refuses to talk to Ron, but both Ron and Harry are thrilled to have a secret helper and to have destroyed a Horcrux. Ron tells Harry in the afternoon about the Taboo: using Voldemort's name alerts the Ministry. Kingsley was almost captured this way. Ron asks if Dumbledore might've sent the doe. Harry wants to think that Dumbledore is still alive, but he shakes his head. Ron suggests that Dumbledore didn't just hand Harry the sword for no reason, as he gave Harry the Snitch and Hermione the book of stories for a reason. Ron says that Dumbledore must've known that he was going to bail, which is why he left him the Deluminator.

The Deluminator allows Ron to believe that Dumbledore is truly looking out for them and that they're on the right path. The joy that Ron and Harry feel about their "secret helper" shows that both of them are desperate to widen their community and draw on others for help. Ron's return begins to do this in some important ways: he has information about the outside world, such as about the Snatchers and about the Taboo, that helps Harry and Hermione make sense of what's going on.



They briefly discuss Rita Skeeter's biography of Dumbledore and Ron attempts to defend Dumbledore's friendship with Grindelwald. Harry spits that Dumbledore was their age, as he practices enlarging a spider with his new wand. It works poorly, but Hermione comes up behind him and insists he needs practice. He doesn't believe her, but he practices levitating stones while he keeps watch later. Ron pulls out a small radio and explains that there's a resistance program that's password-protected, but he missed the last password. He attempts to tune it until Hermione gets up and announces that she wants to visit Xenophilius Lovegood. She shoves Dumbledore's biography at Harry and shows him a copy of Dumbledore's letter, which includes the strange symbol.

The draw of a resistance radio program would allow the trio to connect even better with their outside community, as well as learn important information about simply what's going on out there. Hermione's desire to visit Xenophilius acts in much the same way, as it shows that she knows she can't figure out this symbol on her own, and she knows where she can draw from her community to get the information she needs. This also suggests that she's willing to believe, to a degree, that Dumbledore is leaving clues for them, thereby reaffirming her faith in their mission.



Hermione insists that the symbol must be important and suggests that Dumbledore wanted them to figure out what it means. Ron supports this, but Harry glares at both of them. He agrees to go and they Apparate near the Burrow. Hermione coolly points out that Ron was just here, but Ron explains that he stayed with Bill and Fleur so that the rest of his family wouldn't make his life miserable for abandoning Harry. They finally find the Lovegoods' house on the top of a hill. Hermione knocks on the door and Xenophilius answers quickly. He's in a stained nightshirt and looks scared and unkempt, but he agrees to let them in. They go upstairs to a room where a printing press is printing copies of the *Quibbler*, and Xenophilius puts a tablecloth over it.

That Ron didn't stay with his parents while he was home drives home how guilty he felt about abandoning Harry and Hermione, and how isolating his bad decision was for him. Returning, in other words, doesn't just return him to his friends and to the mission. It also allows Ron to step back into a hero-like role and stay in his family's good graces. Xenophilius's state, like the state of Bathilda Bagshot's home, should read as a warning to the trio—it suggests that Xenophilius isn't doing well, and possibly, that he's under pressure from the Death Eaters.



Hermione points to a horn mounted on the wall in shock. Xenophilius insists it's from a Crumple-Horned Snorkack, but Hermione cries that it's an explosive Erumpent horn. Harry changes the subject and asks for help, but Xenophilius says that this is dangerous. Ron points out that Xenophilius has been printing that it's important to help Harry and Hermione suggests they ask Luna. Xenophilius gulps, says that Luna is at the stream, and agrees to help. He goes downstairs and steps outside as Harry and Ron inspect a strange headdress on a bust. Xenophilius returns and says that Luna will be back soon. Harry asks about the symbol and Xenophilius says it's the symbol of the Deathly Hallows.

Keep in mind that Xenophilius is being blackmailed by the Death Eaters. Knowing this, a generous reading of his actions might suggest that trying to refuse to help Harry is actually an attempt to protect Harry and himself and make it seem as though this meeting never happened. Ron's pep talk to Xenophilius shows that he's taking his return to the group very seriously and now he wants to take what he learned and pay it forward, thereby allowing others to redeem themselves too.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Harry, Ron, and Hermione have no idea what "the Deathly Hallows" means. Xenophilius says that the symbol isn't Dark, and asks if they're familiar with "The Tale of the Three Brothers." Only Ron is, and Hermione pulls out the book from Dumbledore to read it out loud. It tells the story of three brothers who meet Death at a bridge. Death offers them prizes when they don't die in the river. The oldest asks for a powerful wand and the second asks for the power to recall others from the dead. Death fulfills these requests. The youngest asks for something that will allow Death to not follow him, so Death hands over his own Invisibility Cloak.

Giving Ron this opportunity to know something that neither Harry nor Hermione do allows Ron to continue to build himself up again and feel like he's an integral part of the group, not a guilty straggler. The gifts that the brothers ask for show another way of attaining immortality by thwarting death, which introduces Harry to the idea that immortality isn't only attainable through Horcruxes.



The first brother boasts about his wand and another wizard kills him and takes it. The second brother brings his long-dead lover back to life, but she's unhappy and he commits suicide to join her. The third brother lives a long time and gives the cloak to his son before following Death to his own death. Xenophilius picks up a quill and draws the Deathly Hallows—the [Elder Wand](#), the Resurrection Stone, and the Invisibility Cloak—into the triangular symbol. He says that having all the objects will make a person the master of death. Hermione is skeptical that they exist. Xenophilius says that the Cloak is different from others in that it doesn't fade, and Harry thinks *his* cloak is like that. The evidence for the Resurrection Stone is spotty, but Hermione doesn't contradict that history shows signs of a single wand changing hands violently.

The fates of the first two brothers suggest that immortality, whether through Hallows or through Horcruxes, is still not a worthy goal: a better goal is to emulate the third brother and seek to die on one's own terms, while also protecting and preparing one's children for death on their own terms. It's also worth keeping in mind that black elder—presumably, the wood used in the Elder Wand—is poisonous, which suggests that the wand itself is dangerous because of its materials. This is supported by the fact that Voldemort's wand is yew, which is also extremely toxic.



Hermione asks if the Peverell family is related to the Hallows. She says she saw the symbol on a grave in Godric's Hollow, and Xenophilius says that the Peverell brothers were the original owners of the Hallows. He invites the trio to stay for dinner and heads downstairs. Hermione sighs that the Hallows are rubbish and the story is just a morality tale. They all say which Hallows they'd choose and debate their merits, and Ron points out that Harry's Cloak really is different from others. Harry walks around and discovers that the stairs lead to Luna's room. There, he finds a mural of him, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Neville painted on the ceiling, with "friends" written all around them. The room, however, is dusty and it looks like Luna hasn't been home.

Xenophilius returns with four soup bowls and won't answer Harry when he asks where Luna is. The printing press emits a bang and shoots out several *Quibblers*. Hermione picks one up. Harry is on the cover, "Undesirable Number One" printed under his photo. Xenophilius whispers that the Death Eaters took Luna and might give her back if he hands over Harry. Hermione spots Death Eaters outside as Xenophilius tries to Stun them and hits the Erumpent horn instead. The room explodes and Xenophilius falls down the stairs. Harry finds Hermione and they hear two Death Eaters taunting Xenophilius downstairs. One of them sends Xenophilius up to bring Harry down—or they'll kill Luna.

Harry and Hermione quietly dig Ron out. Hermione makes Ron put on the Cloak and when they see Xenophilius's face, she shoots a Memory charm at him, blasts them through the floor so they see the Death Eaters, and then they Disapparate.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The trio lands and Hermione begins to work their protective spells. Hermione groans that she wanted the Death Eaters to see Harry so that they won't hurt Luna, and she made Ron use the Cloak so his family doesn't get in trouble. They set up the tent and, over tea, Hermione laments that visiting Xenophilius was a waste of time. Ron thinks that Xenophilius was telling them what he believes is the truth and points out that the Chamber of Secrets was supposed to be a myth, too. Harry reminds her of the apparitions of his parents and Cedric that he saw when Voldemort returned, and points out that the stone can't actually bring people back.

Luna's mural reminds Harry that there are definitely others out there who care about him and who will happily dedicate themselves to the cause. However, seeing this reminder in the form of the mural and also realizing that Luna isn't around suggests to Harry that Xenophilius isn't actually here to help them. This reminds the trio again that they need to be careful who they trust, as they have enemies everywhere in addition to having friends everywhere.



Xenophilius's behavior here reminds Harry and the reader that being good or bad is more complicated than the binary might suggest. Xenophilius isn't a bad person, but in order to keep his daughter safe, he's being forced into doing some horrible and questionable things—things that he might believe are worth it if Luna survives. This will help Harry to develop a sense of empathy, as well as a greater sense of caution.



Hermione clearly has a plan as they escape the Lovegood's home, which reminds Harry again that he needs his friends and all they bring to the table in order to stay safe.



It's important to note that while Harry clearly thinks that the Resurrection Stone is real, he understands that it's impossible to actually bring people back from the dead—which should remind him that the answers he's looking for from Dumbledore won't be forthcoming, since he can't bring Dumbledore back. This also suggests that Harry has a healthier view of immortality than one might think, since he accepts that immortality has its limits.



Hermione says she looked up the Peverells and the line is extinct, but Harry remembers that Voldemort's grandfather was descended from the Peverells—the ring Horcrux had the Peverell coat of arms on it. Harry reasons that Voldemort didn't know what it was, but both he and Ron think that the stone in the ring was the Resurrection Stone. Hermione is angry, but Harry imagines himself uniting the Deathly Hallows and thinks that this is the way to defeat Voldemort. He inspects his Cloak and realizes he's descended from the Peverells too, and he reasons that the stone is in the Snitch. Harry realizes that Voldemort must be after the [Elder Wand](#), but he must not know about the Deathly Hallows—possessing them would render Horcruxes unnecessary.

Hermione urges Harry to not get sidetracked and even appeals to Ron for support. Ron concedes that the Hallows makes sense, but he believes they're supposed to destroy Horcruxes and not chase Hallows. Harry can't sleep that night and wonders what the inscription on the Snitch means. He thinks that Hermione is just scared of the Resurrection Stone. In the morning, he remembers Luna and feels ashamed of himself. He desperately wants the [Elder Wand](#), especially since he hates the wand Ron brought. He becomes obsessed with the Hallows over the next few days and keeps it a secret that he's seeing into Voldemort's mind in a new, blurry way.

Ron spends his evenings trying to tune into *Potterwatch* and one night in March, he succeeds. Lee Jordan is hosting and he announces that Ted Tonks, Dirk Cresswell, and Gornuk have been murdered, along with a Muggle family. He mentions Bathilda's death and holds a moment of silence. Kingsley encourages listeners to protect their Muggle neighbors, and Lupin encourages people to keep resisting. He says that, if Harry's listening, he wants him to know that his instincts are good. Ron notes that Lupin is living with Tonks again as Lupin says that Xenophilius Lovegood is in Azkaban and Hagrid is on the run. Then, either Fred or George hilariously reminds people to stay vigilant even though Voldemort might be out of the country, making Harry laugh. Harry feels happy and says that Voldemort is abroad looking for the wand, using Voldemort's name. They hear people outside.

Harry is correct that Voldemort is after the Elder Wand. Notably, the fact that Voldemort is pursuing the wand without actually knowing anything about the other Hallows suggests that Voldemort is truly eschewing information in favor of brute strength, as represented by the wand itself. As far as Harry believes, however, the conflict with Voldemort is between which way of attaining immortality is actually superior: Hallows or Horcruxes?



Ron takes this stance because of his experience with the Deluminator and his newfound faith in Dumbledore and their mission. However, it's also easy to point out that Dumbledore left the symbol in the book for Hermione and could've very well intended for them to find out about the Hallows, as well. This shows that, though Harry may be beginning to think more healthily about Dumbledore and his legacy, it's still difficult to decide what exactly to focus on.



Harry's good spirits after hearing Potterwatch shows the true, positive effects of tapping into one's community. In this case, Harry is able to confirm his suspicions that Voldemort is looking for the Elder Wand, thanks to reconnecting with everyone in this way, and he's also able to receive affirmation from Lupin that he's on the right track and doing the right thing. This makes the resistance effort feel more real for Harry, and it affirms that he's not the only person out there fighting Voldemort. In this way, Potterwatch functions as an extension of the graffiti Harry saw outside his parents' home in Godric's Hollow that was supportive of him.



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Hermione shoots a painful curse at Harry's face that makes it swell. Someone jerks him up and others, including Fenrir Greyback, restrain Ron and Hermione. Harry tells Greyback that his name is Vernon Dudley. Ron admits that he's a Weasley, while Hermione says she's Penelope Clearwater. Ron says they used Voldemort's name on accident. The Snatchers tie the trio up with a few others, including Griphook and Dean. Greyback kneels in front of Harry to ask about Harry's fake name. Harry says he's in Slytherin and is able to tell Greyback about the Slytherin common room and that his dad works at the Ministry. A Snatcher finds the sword in the tent and a copy of the *Daily Prophet*.

Harry's scar burns and he finds himself approaching a towering building as Voldemort. Harry pulls his mind back to his reality and hears the Death Eater discover Hermione's identity thanks to a photo in the *Prophet*. Greyback turns to Harry and touches Harry's scar, which burns with pain. The Snatchers stand back in awe as Harry fights to stay in his mind while Voldemort flies to the top of the tower. Greyback decides to take his captives to Malfoy Manor directly as Harry sees Voldemort force himself into the room. Harry is relieved that Voldemort isn't at the Malfoys' as Greyback marches them up the walk. He sees the man in the tower room tell Voldemort that he never had the wand.

Narcissa Malfoy opens the door and, though she's skeptical, she accepts Greyback and his prisoners. She says that Draco is home and can identify Harry. In the sitting room, Lucius excitedly encourages Draco. Harry and Draco refuse to meet eyes, though Harry catches sight of his own reflection in a mirror and thinks that he doesn't look like himself. Draco grudgingly admits that the other captives might be Hermione and Ron as Bellatrix enters and starts to call Voldemort. She stops when she catches sight of the sword, Stuns four of the Snatchers, and towers over Greyback. She says the sword should be in her vault at Gringotts and shrieks that they're in grave danger until they figure out where the trio found it.

Fenrir Greyback, a werewolf, makes this situation even more dangerous, given that he has the power to turn any of his captives into a werewolf, thereby damning them to a life in which they're marginalized and feared. In other words, Greyback threatens them with expulsion from their community in addition to threatening them with being hauled in front of Voldemort.



Though Harry never confirms, the man in the tower room is Grindelwald in prison; Voldemort is there hoping to steal the Elder Wand. By switching back and forth between these two different realities, the reader is able to get the sense that while Harry may be lacking in physical power, he's still able to acquire information that will ultimately be useful—though he has to deal with the fact that Voldemort is getting the same information and can also choose to use it.



Draco's refusal to look at Harry suggests that he's having second thoughts about his involvement with the Death Eaters, something that offers him the opportunity to later choose to repent and change his life for the better. Bellatrix's reaction to discovering the sword suggests that there is someone at Hogwarts (where the sword was) who's on Harry's side, which should tell Harry that Hogwarts isn't as hostile of a place to him as he thinks it is with Snape in charge.



Bellatrix shrieks for every captive but Hermione to be put in the cellar and cuts Hermione loose. Greyback forces Harry, Ron, Griphook, and Dean into the cellar as Hermione screams. Ron shouts until they hear Luna in the cellar with them. Luna unties them with a nail after using Ron's Deluminator to give them light. Harry sees Ollivander in the corner and notices that Griphook is barely conscious. Upstairs, Bellatrix interrogates Hermione about the sword and performs the Cruciatus Curse on her. Harry starts pulling things out of his moleskin bag and sees Dumbledore's eye in the mirror. He asks for help and says they're at Malfoy manor. Hermione sobs that the sword is a copy and Bellatrix sends for Griphook to confirm this. Harry asks Griphook to say that the sword is a fake.

After Draco retrieves Griphook and closes the door, Dobby Apparates into the cellar and whispers that he's here to rescue Harry. Harry and Ron ask Dobby to take Ollivander, Dean, and Luna to Bill and Fleur's and then come back. Harry sees the man in the tower tell Voldemort to kill him and say that there's a lot Voldemort doesn't understand. Lucius hears Dobby Disapparate and sends Wormtail to check on the prisoners. Harry and Ron tackle him as soon as he opens the door. Wormtail starts to choke Harry and Ron imitates Wormtail and calls out that everything is fine. Harry reminds Wormtail that he owes him, and Wormtail lets go. Wormtail's silver hand begins to choke his own throat and he dies.

Harry and Ron run upstairs and see Griphook identify the sword as a fake. Bellatrix calls Voldemort and Harry's scar burns. Voldemort kills the man in the tower as Bellatrix tells Greyback he can have Hermione. Ron races in, Disarms Bellatrix, and Bellatrix threatens to stab Hermione with her knife. Ron and Harry drop their wands, which Draco retrieves. They hear a strange noise as the chandelier drops down on Hermione and Griphook. Harry wrestles back the wands as Dobby reprimands Narcissa and Bellatrix. Harry throws Ron a wand, grabs Griphook and Dobby, and Disapparates. Dobby's hand jerks as they travel. When they arrive, Harry sees Bellatrix's knife in Dobby's chest. He screams for help as Dobby dies in his arms.

In addition to saving their own skins, telling Bellatrix that the sword is a fake also protects the secret helper who seems to be at Hogwarts. Trusting that this person is truly on their side and is worth protecting shows that Hermione is able to trust in her community, even at a point in time when she's being tortured and certainly doesn't have all of her wits about her. Asking Griphook for help shows that Harry also understands the importance of reaching out to others in the community, as Griphook, remember, isn't on Voldemort's side at all and could therefore be a great ally.



Remember that, in the third novel, Harry chose to not kill Wormtail, even knowing that Wormtail betrayed his parents. In the present, Wormtail seems bound by a deeper and different magic than his loyalty to Voldemort might suggest, just as Harry was protected by his mother's sacrifice. This continues to show how powerful love and mercy can be, as they can very literally make it so a person is able to survive.



Dobby's death impresses upon Harry again that, although he's the chosen one and has a lot of work to do as he fights Voldemort, his friends and wider community will also suffer and, in some cases, die so that he can achieve his goals and make life better for everyone. While Dobby's sacrifice doesn't have the same magical heft as Wormtail's hesitation or Lily's sacrifice, this does impress upon Harry the importance of doing whatever needs to be done to support his community and, in the future, advocate for elves like Dobby and Kreacher.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Harry feels like he's back with Dumbledore's body as Bill, Fleur, Dean, and Luna surround him. Dean carries Griphook inside and Harry sees Voldemort punishing everyone at Malfoy Manor. Harry says that he wants to dig Dobby's grave by hand and he realizes that his grief and anger have finally allowed him to shut his mind to Voldemort. He feels as though he no longer cares about the Horcruxes and thinks of how Dumbledore predicted that Wormtail would show Harry mercy. Ron and Dean join Harry to dig and, finally, Harry wraps Dobby in his jacket. Ron puts his own socks and shoes on Dobby's feet while Dean gives Dobby his hat. Luna and everyone else arrive and Harry feels as though Dobby deserves a grander funeral. Luna thanks Dobby, Bill refills the hole with dirt, and Harry carves a headstone.

Harry joins everyone in the living room. Bill is in the middle of explaining that he's moved the rest of his family to Muriel's to protect them from the Death Eaters. He says that both Shell Cottage and Muriel's houses are protected by the Fidelius Charm and says that they can move Ollivander and Griphook soon. Harry says he needs to speak to them both first. Harry thinks that he saw Dumbledore's eye in the mirror and then Dobby came. He wonders if Dumbledore knew Harry would struggle to know what to do, and wonders if Dumbledore withheld information on purpose. Harry sees flashes of Voldemort arriving at Hogwarts and Harry chooses to speak to Griphook first. He calls Ron and Hermione.

Griphook is still holding the sword of Gryffindor. He and Harry remember that Griphook showed Harry to his vault at Gringotts years ago. Griphook mentions that Harry buried Dobby and says that Harry is an unusual wizard in that he dug the grave by hand and rescued him from the Malfoys. Harry says he needs help breaking into the Lestranges' Gringotts vault. Griphook insists it's impossible, but when Harry says he doesn't want to do this for his own gain, Griphook says he believes it—most "wand-carriers" don't treat goblins and elves well, but Harry does. Griphook notes that wizards have denied goblins the right to wands and Ron begins to argue that goblins won't share their metalworking secrets. Harry insists that this isn't about wizards being against other creatures, but Griphook points out that, with Voldemort in power, no wizard will stand up for goblins or elves.

Choosing to dig Dobby's grave by hand allows Harry to feel as though he's honoring the years of work that Dobby did, unpaid and unappreciated. Further, realizing that he can now shut his mind to Voldemort shows Harry that when he focuses on his love for others, even when it's angry and tumultuous love like now, he's able to remain in his own mind and maintain autonomy. This should remind Harry that Dumbledore had the right idea, and that there are few things in the world stronger or more meaningful than love.



Seeing Dumbledore's eye makes it clear to Harry that there are questions that, at this point, he simply can't find answers to. Dumbledore is dead and, yet, Harry saw his eye—now, Harry has to choose to believe that Dumbledore is helping him and orchestrated a quest for him that Harry is capable of finishing, or he has to decide that Dumbledore deceived him. That Harry has the choice one way or the other reminds him that it's up to him to decide how to engage with Dumbledore's legacy; it's not something that someone else will force on him.



Griphook's observations about Harry are observations about a wizard who, notably, wasn't raised in the Wizarding world. Ron has grown up hearing about goblins and how they keep their secrets, so he hasn't yet fully bought into Hermione's desire to liberate elves. Harry is in some ways an outsider who can see these injustices and engage with them without the biased history that places wizards above everyone else. Griphook also has a point about what will happen with Voldemort in power: it's one thing to stand up to bumbling Cornelius Fudge for elf rights, and another entirely to fight for one's own life in addition to elves' or goblins' rights.



Hermione insists that, as a Mudblood, she has just as few rights as Griphook does under Voldemort. Harry says he needs something else from the Lestranges' vault and Griphook says he'll think about helping. Harry takes the sword from Griphook as he leaves the room, and, in the hallway, he whispers that he thinks the Lestranges have another Horcrux in the vault. He says that Bellatrix probably doesn't know what it is, but that Gringotts would be a symbol of belonging for Voldemort.

In Ollivander's room, Harry firmly closes his mind to Voldemort, thinking he made his decision to speak to Griphook first. He asks Ollivander first if he can mend his broken wand, but Ollivander can't. He then asks Ollivander to identify the wands Harry stole. One is Bellatrix's; the other is Draco's. Ollivander explains that wands have feelings and learn from their owners. He thinks that Draco's wand is now loyal to Harry, and that Wormtail's wand is loyal to Ron. Harry asks if it's necessary to kill to take control of a wand and asks about the [Elder Wand](#). Ollivander looks terrified, but confirms everything that Harry has seen about Voldemort's quest for it. He says that Voldemort thinks the wand will make him invincible.

Ollivander assures Hermione that the [Elder Wand](#) is indeed real, and confirms that he told Voldemort that Gregorovitch had the wand. Harry then asks what Ollivander knows about the Deathly Hallows. Ollivander looks bewildered. Harry thanks him and leads Ron and Hermione out to the garden, still resisting the connection with Voldemort. He tells them that Grindelwald stole the wand from Gregorovitch, and Dumbledore won the wand in their famous duel. Ron says they need to go to Hogwarts and get it, but Harry says it's too late. He sees Voldemort opening Dumbledore's tomb to take the wand and tells Ron that Dumbledore wanted them to get the Horcruxes, not the Hallows.

It's worth noting that Voldemort seems to keep secrets from his followers in the same way that Dumbledore possibly kept secrets from Harry. By drawing out these comparisons, it becomes easier to see that there's a lot of nuance when it comes to good versus evil in the Wizarding world, and that people from all walks of life engage in the same, possibly unsavory, behavior.



Just like Xenophilius Lovegood, Ollivander exists in a liminal space when it comes to good and evil: though he could've let Voldemort kill him rather than spill the secrets of wandlore, he chose instead to save his life and share what he knows. However, Ollivander is just as willing to tell Harry the same information and to give Harry other useful information, suggesting that he's attempting to atone for what he told Voldemort by telling the one person capable of remedying what Voldemort will do.



Now, Harry reveals that his choice to speak to Griphook first really means a choice to not go to Hogwarts and stop Voldemort from getting the Elder Wand out of Dumbledore's tomb. With this, Harry shows that he's throwing his faith in his knowledge, not in the brute strength represented by the Elder Wand. He believes that he can find information that will help him overpower the wand or make the wand less meaningful in the long run.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Harry is shaken by his choice to not get the [Elder Wand](#) before Voldemort. Ron continually voices all of Harry's doubts, while Hermione supports Harry's choice and believes the Elder Wand is evil. Harry fears that he didn't understand what Dumbledore wanted and Ron continues to wonder if Dumbledore isn't actually dead. While they argue about this one afternoon, Fleur tells Harry that Griphook wants to speak with him. Griphook says he'll help Harry in return for the sword of Gryffindor. Griphook becomes angry when Ron says he can choose something else from the Lestranges' vault, and insists that the sword belongs to goblins—Gryffindor stole it. The trio excuse themselves to confer. Hermione admits it's possible that the sword was stolen, though Ron says that goblins just want to blame wizards. Ron suggests they double-cross Griphook and Hermione chastises him.

Harry suggests that they agree to give Griphook the sword, but be intentionally vague on when they'll hand it over. Hermione hates it, but they all agree and Griphook does too. They begin planning immediately and plan for weeks. Bill and Fleur don't ask questions. Harry soon realizes that he dislikes Griphook. Griphook seems bloodthirsty and is rude to Fleur. Harry apologizes to Fleur one evening, but she brushes this aside and says that things will be easier once Ollivander leaves later. Harry says that he'll be leaving soon too, which shocks Fleur. Dean and Luna burst in, interrupting the awkward moment.

Bill helps Ollivander down the stairs. He bids Luna goodbye and agrees to take Auntie Muriel's tiara, which Fleur borrowed for her wedding, back to Muriel. Fleur shows the tiara to Ollivander and Griphook sees that it's goblin-made. Bill insists that wizards paid for it as he leads Ollivander away. Bill returns not long after, and Luna pipes up that Xenophilius is making a crown modeled off of the lost diadem of Ravenclaw. She's interrupted when they hear a knock. Lupin announces himself and, when Bill lets him in, he shouts that Tonks just gave birth to a baby boy. He asks Harry to be the godfather to baby Teddy as Bill fetches wine. Except for Griphook, they all celebrate until Lupin leaves.

Bill asks Harry for a private word and says he knows Harry is planning something with Griphook, and if there's any treasure involved, Harry needs to be careful. Bill explains that some goblins believe that humans don't respect goblin ownership, and they think that when humans keep goblin-made objects for generations, they're stealing. They believe that the item should be returned to goblins after the purchaser dies. He says it's safer to break into Gringotts than double-cross a goblin. Harry thinks he's going to be just as reckless of a godfather as Sirius was.

Discovering that Godric Gryffindor might have stolen the sword from goblins shows that pretty much all historical figures aren't entirely good or entirely bad: Harry has idolized Godric Gryffindor for years and has constructed his identity around being a brave Gryffindor, just like the House founder. Understanding this nuance, however, will help Harry learn to read between the lines and make decisions based on more than just what feels good to believe—though part of this is indeed choosing what to believe, and choosing to believe that Gryffindor was good can, in turn, help Harry feel more righteous and brave.



That Griphook is an unpleasant person to be around impresses upon Harry the necessity of maintaining good relationships with everyone in his community in pursuit of a noble goal: they can't break into Gringotts without Griphook and, given how wizards have historically treated goblins, Harry also likely feels compelled to do better than his forebears.



Asking Harry to be Teddy's godfather again shows how Harry's wider community can most effectively draw him in and make him official parts of their family. With this, Harry also continues to come of age as he switches his focus to Teddy's new life, rather than dwelling on what Dumbledore's life was like. In this way, Harry can pay what he learned from Dumbledore forward, while also further cementing himself in his community.



It's telling that Harry does now conceptualize Sirius as a reckless godfather, given how much he idolized Sirius in earlier novels. This represents a major turning point for Harry, as it suggests that he's becoming more comfortable with looking critically at the adults in his life and evaluating how they succeed and how they fail to parent him as he moves forward into adulthood himself.



CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Griphook are finally ready. Harry is relieved that Draco's wand seems to have switched allegiances, though he feels horrible about his choice to double-cross Griphook. Griphook seems aware that Harry is planning to do this and never leaves the trio alone together. On the appointed morning, Harry and Ron head outside to wait for Hermione and Griphook. Harry thinks that Dobby's grave is in the perfect spot, though he still wonders how Dumbledore sent the elf.

Hermione, disguised as Bellatrix, emerges from the cottage with Griphook. She transforms Ron's face so he can assume a fake identity, while Harry and Griphook will be under the Invisibility Cloak. Outside the boundary of the Fidelius Charm, Griphook climbs on Harry's back and the four of them Apparate to the Leaky Cauldron. Hermione struggles to get in character and is too nice to the barman, but they make it into Diagon Alley. Ragged people sit in doorways begging. Some disappear when they see Hermione; one man throws himself at her asking where his children are. Ron blasts him away.

Travers greets Bellatrix and Harry whispers who Travers is to Hermione. Hermione allows Travers to walk with her, but this proves potentially dangerous: Travers wants to know why Bellatrix isn't still imprisoned at Malfoy Manor and why Bellatrix has her wand when they know that Harry stole it. Hermione coolly tells Travers to not listen to rumors. Harry Confunds the two wizards acting as security at Gringotts's doors. When Hermione asks the goblin Bogrod to take her to her vault, he asks for identification. Griphook hisses that they suspect this Bellatrix isn't the real one, and Harry places the goblin under the Imperius curse. He does the same for Travers. Bogrod calls for the "Clankers" and leads his clients through a door.

Harry reveals himself, explains that Bogrod and Travers are under the Imperius Curse, and says that the other goblins suspect them. They agree to go on, so Harry makes Travers hide and Bogrod calls a cart. As they zoom along, Harry thinks their plan was foolish. They pass under a waterfall, get dumped out of the cart, and Hermione returns to her normal form. Griphook explains that the water sets off alarms and washes away concealment charms. Harry replaces the Imperius Curse on Bogrod and, moments later, they reach a gigantic tethered dragon. Griphook passes out the Clankers and everyone shakes them. The dragon retreats in fear at the noise. Harry makes Bogrod put his hand on the door of the Lestranges' vault and the door disappears to reveal mounds of treasure.

At this point, Dobby's grave serves as a reminder for Harry that, when he needs help, he just needs to ask for it and it will come—though there's no guarantee that help will be painless for all involved. He is, in other words, beginning to make sense of his relationship to Dumbledore and see Dobby as proof that someone is helping.



The ragged people are presumably those who underwent trial with Umbridge and had their wands taken away—and their children. This shows Harry what he's fighting against. By destroying Voldemort, he'll usher in a world in which these people can have wands again and resume their places as contributing members of Wizarding society.



Remember that as an Unforgivable Curse, using the Imperius Curse could land Harry in Azkaban under normal circumstances (using an Unforgivable Curse earns a person a lifetime sentence in Azkaban). That Harry chooses to use it suggests first that desperate times call for desperate measures, and calls Harry's own relative goodness into question. While his quest to defeat Voldemort is undeniably good, the reader is forced to go through some of the same thought processes that Harry has had to deal with and decide if Harry is less of a good person because of this choice.



The effects of the waterfall call into question whether Griphook actually told Harry everything Harry needed to know to make this work. Again, this shows Harry that he needs to be critical of the help he gets and the information he receives, even when it seems like he's on the same side as his allies—everyone has their own goals and, possibly, is working for themselves as much as they're helping Harry.



The door closes behind them and they begin to search for Hufflepuff's cup. Hermione touches a goblet and it burns her and begins to multiply. Griphook instructs them to touch nothing. Harry sees the cup and asks for the sword to try to hook it through a handle. Hermione levitates him, knocking more treasure over. Harry hooks the cup, pulls Griphook out of the burning metal, and loses the sword. Griphook grabs it, flinging the cup, and Harry knows that Griphook knew he wasn't going to keep his word. Harry catches the cup as the mound of treasure pushes him, Ron, and Hermione out of the vault. Griphook joins the approaching goblins. Harry releases the dragon, climbs on its back with Hermione and Ron, and, when the dragon realizes it's free, it starts to climb. It takes off from street level.

Despite Griphook's choice to defect and join the other goblins, it's worth noting that, technically speaking, he kept his word—and he also made sure that Harry kept his word. This makes it easier to see that Griphook was an understandably suspicious ally, but one that was fundamentally not a bad person. Later, should Harry choose to think about it in this way, this could show Harry the importance of recognizing goblins as contributing members of society and of keeping his word.



CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Harry, Ron, and Hermione cling tightly to the dragon. As they fly, Harry wonders how long it'll take Voldemort to realize what happened. Hours later, the dragon starts to descend toward a lake. The trio jumps into the water and watches the dragon continue to the far bank. They tend to their burns, inspect the cup, and laugh at their ridiculous predicament. Suddenly, Harry's scar bursts with pain and he finds himself in Voldemort's mind, torturing a goblin and learning that Harry stole a cup from the Lestrange's vault. Voldemort screams in rage that Harry discovered his secret. He murders the goblin and others, and wonders if Harry and Dumbledore know his secret. He decides to check on his other Horcruxes, and thinks he'll visit Hogwarts last and keep Nagini close to him.

Harry's excursion into Voldemort's mind shows him Voldemort's biggest weakness: that he believes himself to be smarter than anyone else, and invincible because of that. In other words, Voldemort has spent his life devaluing everyone else's intelligence, especially those he despises like Dumbledore and Harry, and in doing so he's left it wide open for someone else to figure out that he has Horcruxes. His desire to check on his Horcruxes suggests he might understand this mishap, while it's also important to remember that he has the Elder Wand and, therefore, he likely still feels invincible.



Harry returns to his own mind, tells Hermione and Ron what he saw, and says they need to go to Hogwarts immediately. He says that Voldemort is going to warn Snape that they might come, and says they'll Apparate to Hogsmeade under the Cloak.

Returning to Hogwarts reminds the reader that this is a series about a school, and about the fact that whoever controls the school controls the public at large.



CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

As soon as Harry, Ron, and Hermione land in Hogsmeade, a shrill scream pierces the air. Death Eaters spill out of the Three Broomsticks and try to summon the Cloak, but it doesn't move. The trio hides in an alley and the Death Eaters agree to release dementors to find Harry. Hermione tries to Disapparate, but they can't. They see dementors coming and Harry conjures his Patronus. A voice tells Harry to get inside the Hog's Head and go upstairs. Harry obeys and he listens to the man tell the Death Eaters that the Patronus was a goat, not a stag. After an argument, the Death Eaters leave. The barman comes upstairs. He has piercing blue eyes, and Harry realizes that this is Aberforth. He has the other enchanted mirror, and he sent Dobby.

While Aberforth resembles Dumbledore primarily in looks and especially with his eyes, realizing that this is Dumbledore's brother gives Harry another insight into how a person can continue to affect positive change after death. Just as Harry continues to fight Voldemort, just like his parents, Aberforth has been furthering Dumbledore's goals by helping out Harry. All of this helps to rob death of its fear and mystery, as this shows it is possible to live (at least in some way) after death.



Aberforth brings the trio food and tells them to get out of Hogsmeade. Harry says he needs to get into Hogwarts and has to do what Dumbledore asked him to do. Aberforth notes that Dumbledore's plans often caused people to get hurt and tells Harry to leave the country before he dies. Aberforth says the battle is already lost and tells Harry to let someone else do his job. He asks if Dumbledore was honest with Harry, but Harry can't answer. Aberforth says that Dumbledore learned to lie as a boy and he stares at a portrait of a girl over the mantel. Hermione recognizes her as Ariana. Harry says nothing. He thinks that he chose to believe in Dumbledore's mission and has no desire to doubt now.

Hermione says that Dumbledore cared about Harry, but Aberforth spits that lots of people Dumbledore "cared" about suffered. Aberforth angrily says that when Ariana was six, three Muggle boys assaulted her when they saw her doing magic. It made her mad; she couldn't control her magic and was sometimes dangerous. She loved Aberforth and would calm down for him. She accidentally killed Kendra when she was fourteen, and Dumbledore returned home to care for her. He began to neglect Ariana when Grindelwald arrived and, finally, Aberforth put his foot down and refused to let Dumbledore take Ariana around the world with him. He and Grindelwald began to duel, Dumbledore joined in to stop Grindelwald torturing Aberforth, and Ariana died in the confusion. Aberforth doesn't know who killed her.

Aberforth says that Grindelwald left and Dumbledore was then free of his burdens. Harry says that Dumbledore wasn't free: the potion Dumbledore drank in the cave on the night he died made Dumbledore re-live the duel and plead with someone to hurt him instead. Aberforth tells Harry that if Dumbledore loved him, he'd have told Harry to hide. Harry insists that he hasn't given up, he needs to think about the greater good, and he knows how to finish Voldemort. He asks for help getting into Hogwarts. Aberforth sighs and turns to the portrait of Ariana. She walks back through her portrait and returns a few minutes later. The portrait swings open to reveal Neville.

At this critical moment, Harry finally understands that dealing with Dumbledore's legacy is indeed a matter of choosing to believe or not. He can choose to allow Aberforth to derail him and cast doubt on Dumbledore and what he tried to do, or he can choose to reaffirm his commitment to Dumbledore and what Dumbledore asked of Harry. Choosing to recommit to his mission shows that Harry now understands that the only way to honor Dumbledore's memory is by completing this task and passing on Dumbledore's wisdom.



Ariana's story begins to show Harry that, while magic may be what gives people like Voldemort and Grindelwald their power, magic also has the potential to destroy a vulnerable young person like Ariana—and destroy her whole family's life in the process. It's also telling that Ariana died at a time when Dumbledore was dedicating himself to intellectual pursuits with Grindelwald; this suggests that there are consequences to leaning too heavily in either direction, though it may be safer to rely on knowledge than magic.



In this moment, Harry also recognizes how uncertainty and tragedy can hobble a person: just as Harry has been occasionally too caught up in stewing over Dumbledore to dedicate himself to his quest, Dumbledore, it seems, was never fully able to move on from Ariana's death and suffered his entire life because of what happened. This shows Harry the importance of learning how to move on, however a person chooses to do that.



CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Neville hugs Ron and Hermione. Harry notices that he's bruised and looks rough. Neville brightly tells Aberforth that people will be Apparating into the bar and should be let through, and then leads the trio into the passage. He explains that all the other passages are sealed and asks if it's true that they broke into Gringotts. Neville says that the Carrows, Amicus and Alecto, are horrible. Amicus teaches students to use the Cruciatus Curse on those who have earned detention, while Alecto teaches in Muggle Studies that Muggles are dirty animals. Neville says he's been standing up to them like Harry used to do, and insists he's not in real danger because he's pureblooded.

Neville says that they've been communicating through the fake Galleons that they used in Dumbledore's Army. He says that they lost Luna and Ginny, and a few weeks ago, the Death Eaters tried to kidnap Neville's gran to scare him into submission. His gran is now on the run and the Death Eater is in St. Mungo's. Neville leads Harry, Ron, and Hermione into a room filled with about 20 people. It's the Room of Requirement, and has expanded as more students have had to go into hiding. They get food from Aberforth.

Harry's scar burns and he sees Voldemort discovering the missing ring. He pulls himself back to his reality, gives Ron and Hermione a look, and says they need to get going. Seamus asks what the plan is and Neville asks to help, but Harry refuses. He says that Dumbledore gave them a secret job, which they need to accomplish and then leave. Luna and Dean burst through the passage and Luna is sure that they're here to overthrow Snape and the Carrows. Ginny, Fred, George, Lee Jordan, and Cho Chang come a few moments later. George asks what the plan is and Harry angrily says there isn't one. Ron turns to Harry and quietly says they can help, since even the trio doesn't know what they're looking for. Harry wonders briefly if he's becoming secretive like Dumbledore.

Harry agrees and tells the room that they're looking for an object, probably from Ravenclaw. Luna suggests Ravenclaw's diadem, but Cho says it's been lost for centuries. Luna notes that there's a bust of Ravenclaw in the Ravenclaw common room wearing the diadem. Harry flits to Voldemort's mind and sees him flying. He agrees to go with Luna to see the diadem. They creep through the castle under the Invisibility Cloak and into the common room. He approaches the bust and studies the diadem, stepping out from under the Cloak. Alecto laughs behind him and touches the snake tattoo on her forearm.

That Neville learned the importance of standing up to tyrants from Harry suggests that Harry is more like Dumbledore and more of a teacher in general than he's previously thought. This again shows Harry how to begin to pay Dumbledore's legacy forward and, indeed, how he's already begun to do so by inspiring others to stand up to bigotry and intimidation, just like Dumbledore would've encouraged them to do.



The effectiveness and the intricacy of the Hogwarts resistance movement again shows Harry that he's not alone; there are at least 20 people who have been supporting his mission and keeping the resistance alive. This means that Voldemort hasn't yet been able to successfully bring the school under control.



Wondering whether he's becoming like Dumbledore in a negative sense shows that Harry is quickly gaining maturity: he now sees that not everything Dumbledore did was unequivocally good, and he should pay attention to his own behavior and catch himself while he still has the opportunity. That everyone else shows up and offers to help makes it abundantly clear that Harry's community is ready to go and defeat Voldemort; they've been waiting for their leader and now that Harry is here, they're ready.



Harry's choice to go with Luna and hear what she has to say about the diadem shows that he's beginning to truly incorporate all that he's learned about pulling information from a variety of sources, even when those sources seem unreliable or unlikely. However, by trusting Luna, he also shows her that he cares about her and, in doing so, likely earns more of her loyalty going forward.



CHAPTER THIRTY

Harry's scar sears and he sees that Voldemort knows he's captured at Hogwarts. He returns to his reality when he hears a bang; Luna Stunned Alecto. Harry and Luna hide under the Cloak as Ravenclaws come down to see what the noise was. Harry checks in with Voldemort and sees he's checking on the locket. Amicus knocks on the door but refuses to answer the riddle posed by the knocker. Professor McGonagall interrupts his shouting, answers the riddle, and lets him in. He shrieks that they're doomed when he sees Alecto and explains that she told Voldemort that they have Harry. Alecto has been keeping watch, as they suspected he'd try to get into Ravenclaw Tower.

Amicus suggests that they can blame it on the kids and let Voldemort deal with them. McGonagall refuses to allow this and Amicus spits in her face. Harry reveals himself, performs the Cruciatus Curse on Amicus, and tells McGonagall that Voldemort is coming. Luna reveals herself, and Harry asks McGonagall if she knows where the lost diadem is. She tries to get Harry to leave, but puts Amicus under the Imperius Curse and ties up both Carrows. Harry flits between his mind and Voldemort realizing that the locket is gone. He tells McGonagall that he has to finish Dumbledore's mission and she needs to get the students out of Hogwarts. She promises to secure the school and take students out through the Hog's Head while Harry searches.

McGonagall sends Patronuses and leads Harry and Luna under the Cloak through the school. They run into Snape, who asks where the Carrows are and if they caught an intruder. He wants to know why she's awake and if she's seen Harry. The professors begin to duel and Professors Sprout, Flitwick, and Slughorn join McGonagall. They chase Snape until he jumps out of a window. Harry sees a winged shape flying away. He sees Voldemort heading for the school and shouts that they need to barricade Hogwarts. Sprout runs to fetch her students while Flitwick begins casting spells. Harry asks him if he knows where Ravenclaw's diadem is, but he doesn't know. Slughorn nervously suggests that trying to fight Voldemort is foolish, but McGonagall tells him that if he tries to undermine their efforts, they'll fight to the death.

McGonagall's ability to answer the knocker's riddle shows that, while she may be the head of Gryffindor House, she still has qualities that would make her a good Ravenclaw—which adds nuance to the idea that people in general are multifaceted and the Sorting doesn't accurately get at all the qualities and character traits of a person.



That McGonagall so readily accepts Harry, his explanation, and that she needs to protect students shows that she's also been a waiting member of Harry's resistance movement—and that her first loyalty is to the children she's charged with protecting. By agreeing to make sure the school is safe for them, McGonagall shows that she understands that the battle with Voldemort is really about who will control the school, and who will have control over the lives of these students and what they believe.



Remember that Slughorn was a Slytherin; with Snape now acting as headmaster, Slughorn has now likely become the head of Slytherin House. His nervousness suggests that what motivates Slytherins more than anything else is fear, not necessarily greed or a love of power. This is an important idea for Harry to grapple with going forward, as he does know that Voldemort fears death more than almost anyone else—and possibly, fears death more than he wants to be in control of everything.



Harry and Luna follow McGonagall, watch her bring the suits of armor to life, and then run back to the Room of Requirement. There, they find Kingsley, Lupin, Mr. Weasley, Mrs. Weasley, and the Gryffindor Quidditch team. Harry explains that they're going to fight. Most of the room races for the Great Hall, but Harry joins the Weasleys in the middle of the room. Mrs. Weasley forbids Ginny from fighting as Percy tumbles through the tunnel. Fleur and Lupin start to loudly talk about Teddy as Percy apologizes and explains that he's been trying to get out of the Ministry safely for a while. They all decide that Ginny will stay in the Room of Requirement and Harry is puzzled to learn that Ron and Hermione went to the bathroom. He flits to Voldemort's mind and sees that Voldemort is ready to kill.

Percy's choice to rejoin his family and fight for the side of good—and the Weasley family's willingness to forgive him—shows Harry yet again that choices define a person. Percy can now go down in history as someone who made the choice to fight on the right side and for the right reasons. Like Dumbledore, he can go on to be a person who made a grave mistake in his youth, but he can also move forward and be a person who ultimately chose to dedicate himself and possibly die fighting for good.



CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Harry arrives in the Great Hall as McGonagall announces the evacuation plan. He looks around for Ron and Hermione as Voldemort's voice echoes through the hall, saying that fighting is useless and asking for Harry by midnight. Pansy Parkinson shrieks and points to Harry, but Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs, and Ravenclaws stand in front of him. The younger students evacuate, leaving the older students who want to fight. Kingsley announces the battle plan and McGonagall sends Harry off to look for the diadem. Harry tries not to panic and checks the Marauder's Map for Ron and Hermione. He races back to the Great Hall to find Nearly Headless Nick and asks who the Ravenclaw ghost is. Nick points Harry to the Gray Lady.

That Harry feels so lost without Ron and Hermione speaks to the fact that he now truly understands that he needs them and his community at large in order to be successful. While receiving the support of the Hufflepuffs, Ravenclaws, and Gryffindors is nice, it doesn't give him the same sense of security that he gets from knowing that his best friends are safe and around to support him. Calling on Nick, a ghost, shows that Harry is continuing to recognize the importance of asking for help, even from those who might not be immediately obvious.



Harry races after the Gray Lady and begs her to help him find the lost diadem. She's disdainful at first, but Harry says he needs it to defeat Voldemort and save Hogwarts. She admits that, in life, she was Helena Ravenclaw, the daughter of Rowena Ravenclaw, and says that she stole the diadem. Rowena never knew, but sent the Bloody Baron to fetch Helena when Rowena was close to death. He killed Helena and then himself, while the diadem stayed hidden in a hollow tree in Albania. She admits that she told this story to Tom Riddle, and Harry realizes that Voldemort must've brought the diadem back to Hogwarts when he asked for a job. Harry thanks the Gray Lady and wonders where the diadem is.

Harry's conceptualization of this battle as being one over Hogwarts itself shows again that what he and Voldemort are really fighting for is the right to tell young people what is right—whether they'll learn tolerance and kindness, or selfishness and greed. The Gray Lady's willingness to help Harry shows that even the ghosts believe in this goal and are willing to admit their faults in order to help Harry right past wrongs and, hopefully, restore the school to its former glory.



Hagrid suddenly crashes through a window next to Harry with Fang. He explains that he and Grawp heard Voldemort from up in their cave and smashed through the boundary. They stride through the castle looking for Ron and Hermione. They pass the shattered gargoyles that guarded the staff room, and Harry suddenly realizes where the diadem is: in the Room of Requirement. Harry passes Fred and then comes upon Aberforth, who asks Harry why he didn't keep a few Slytherin kids hostage. Harry says that Voldemort wouldn't care and Dumbledore wouldn't have done it. Harry races on and finally finds Ron and Hermione. Ron explains that they went down to the Chamber of Secrets, destroyed the cup with a basilisk fang, and grabbed more fangs so they can destroy the last Horcrux.

Harry quickly tells them where the diadem is and they run to the Room of Requirement. There, they find Neville's gran and Tonks. Tonks runs to find Lupin and Neville's gran goes to help Neville. Ginny is delighted to leave the room. Ron sharply says that they need to evacuate the house-elves, and Hermione races to him and kisses him. Harry begs them to wait. Harry asks the Room of Requirement for "the place where everything is hidden." The trio enters. Ron is shocked that Tom Riddle thought he was the only one who'd ever hidden things here—the room is the size of a cathedral and filled with items.

Harry leads them to where he remembers seeing the diadem. Hermione tries to Summon it, and then they split up. Just as Harry sees the diadem, Draco, Crabbe, and Goyle stop him. Crabbe softly says that they're going to capture Harry for Voldemort and then sends a tower of junk toppling near Ron. Malfoy tries to stop him, insisting they need to get the diadem, but Crabbe says he doesn't listen to Draco anymore. When Ron shouts for Harry, Crabbe shoots a curse at Harry but hits the diadem, sending it flying. He aims a Killing Curse at Hermione. Hermione shrieks and points to where Ron and Crabbe are running at them, flames pursuing them.

Draco drags Goyle, who's Stunned, as Crabbe runs ahead. Harry, Ron, and Hermione stop as the fire mutates into serpents and dragons. Harry grabs two brooms and they fly above the flames. He swoops down when he sees Draco, and Ron angrily dives for Goyle. They fly to the door, Harry grabs the airborne diadem, and they close the door behind them. Malfoy chokes and Ron says that Crabbe is dead. They realize that Ginny is missing and see that the diadem, black with soot, seems to be bleeding. It breaks apart and Hermione whispers that Crabbe conjured Fiendfyre, one of the only ways to destroy Horcruxes.

Harry is right; while stealing children may sway some of Voldemort's followers, Voldemort himself won't care that there are loyal children held hostage—if only because he believes that he's going to be victorious and that there's nothing to worry about in the first place. The revelation of what Hermione and Ron were doing shows Harry again that he can rely on his friends to use their individual experiences to come up with plans and effectively execute them, leaving Harry in a place where he can do the same.



Ron's assessment of Tom Riddle's incorrect beliefs shows again that what plagues Voldemort is the idea that he's smarter and cleverer than his opponents when there's plenty of evidence that this isn't true, from this room filled with hidden objects to the missing Horcruxes. For Voldemort, then, it becomes even more crucial in his mind to rely on the Elder Wand and brute strength, which he believes will be stronger than knowledge and humbleness anyway.



In this moment, Draco seems as though his life has totally run away from him: his cronies will no longer listen, and his family is in danger of getting even further on Voldemort's bad side. That most of the flying curses are coming from Crabbe and Goyle suggests that Draco mostly wants to get out of this alive and to bring honor to his family; it's less important to him to actually kill Harry.



Harry and Ron's choices to rescue Draco and Goyle show that they also recognize that their actions matter—letting Draco and Goyle die, especially when Draco seems questionably committed to the cause, would be unconscionable. With this, Harry and Ron are then able to reassert themselves as good guys, and give Draco and Goyle the opportunity to start making choices that will make them better people in the long run.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione see Fred and Percy dueling masked Death Eaters. The trio runs up to help as an explosion throws them all back and blasts open the castle wall. Harry is bleeding when he stands up. He sees Percy and Ron shaking Fred, who is dead.

Fred's death makes it abundantly clear for Harry that this battle is the one in which everyone has to deal with the possibility of sacrificing themselves—and in doing so, of dying on their own terms.



CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Percy refuses to leave Fred's body. A giant spider climbs through the hole and Harry curses it. He and Ron begin to shoot curses down on the other spiders, help Percy move Fred's body into a hidden niche, and then Hermione pulls Ron and Harry behind a curtain. Ron is furious and wants revenge, but Hermione pleads with him that they need to find Nagini. She tells Harry to look inside Voldemort and figure out where he is and Harry obeys. Voldemort is in the Shrieking Shack and thinks that the diadem is safe. He tells Lucius Malfoy that he doesn't care about Draco and says that Harry will come to him soon. He then sends Lucius to fetch Snape, and turns to Nagini in a suspended, glittering cage.

Voldemort's comment about not caring about Draco confirms Harry's assessment that Voldemort wouldn't have cared if Harry had kept Slytherin children, since Draco is a Death Eater (and therefore, valuable on some level to Voldemort) and he doesn't even care. Hermione's pep talk to Ron shows that, in order to properly honor Fred, they need to continue fighting for what he believes in and not let themselves get trampled and die unnecessarily.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione argue about who should go to the shack. Two Death Eaters interrupt them, but Hermione turns the stairs into a slide and then conjures a wall. Harry throws the Cloak over all of them and they run through the grounds, saving Draco from a suspicious Death Eater as they go. Hermione shoots a curse at Fenrir Greyback and Professor Trelawney throws a crystal ball on his head. They see Hagrid burst in, yelling for people to stop hurting the spiders, but the spiders pick up and carry Hagrid away into the forest. A giant stops Harry from chasing Hagrid, and Grawp begins to wrestle with the giant. Out on the grounds, they find dementors and struggle to conjure Patronuses, but Luna and Seamus save them and Luna talks Harry through conjuring his own.

Luna's pep talk reminds Harry that he can call on his community in times of need—he taught them to conjure the Patronuses and now they can repay the favor and help Harry when he needs it. Saving Draco again suggests that Draco, like Wormtail, might owe Harry a favor in the future, which continues to make room for Draco to ultimately redeem himself.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione race away from another giant to the Whomping Willow. Harry briefly considers leaving Ron and Hermione, but they all squeeze into the passage. It seems smaller than they remember. They put the Cloak on as they get close to the end. They stop to listen when they can see Nagini, and they hear Voldemort and Snape. Snape offers to find Harry, but Voldemort ignores this and asks why the Elder Wand won't work for him. He says that it works like any other wand and again refuses to let Snape fetch Harry. Harry feels Voldemort's painful rage in his scar as Voldemort says that none of his wands have worked to kill Harry. He says that he needs to kill Snape in order to master the wand, and sets Nagini on Snape.

Harry's observations about things seeming smaller than they used to (the last time he was in this passageway, he was thirteen) make it clear to Harry just how much he's grown up over the course of his years at Hogwarts. He's no longer the innocent thirteen-year-old kid who ran down this passageway years ago; now, he knows that he's going to find Voldemort at the end and knows that he needs to approach with caution. Voldemort's choice to murder Snape again reinforces that he's relying on power and strength more than anything else.



Voldemort moves the cage and Nagini with him and leaves the shack. Harry pulls himself through the trapdoor and approaches Snape. Snape tells Harry to "take it," and Harry sees silver coming from his mouth and ears. Hermione conjures a flask and Harry puts the memories in it. Snape asks Harry to look at him and then dies.

That Snape is giving Harry memories calls into question whether Snape was actually the villain Harry thought he was. He clearly has something to explain, and Harry's willingness to accept this offering and effectively hear Snape out represents a turning point for both of them.



CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Harry stares at Snape until he hears Voldemort's voice, magnified to reach all of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade. He tells Harry to come to him in an hour, or he'll kill everyone. Hermione and Ron lead him back through the tunnel and to the castle. When they enter the Great Hall, Harry sees the Weasleys surrounding Fred's body. He sees Lupin and Tonks's bodies too, and races away to Dumbledore's office. Harry pulls out the Pensieve, pours in Snape's thoughts, and dives in.

Seeing that Lupin and Tonks are also dead shows Harry the consequences of not winning: more people will die. This leads Harry to reach for anything that will help him ultimately win, even if it means turning to Snape for answers as to how to do this.



Young Snape looks unkempt. From a hiding place, he watches young Lily and Petunia play. Lily giggles and makes a flower open and close its petals. Petunia is both horrified and desirous. Snape jumps in and says that Lily is a witch. The girls walk away, but he chases after them and says that he's a wizard. Petunia pulls Lily away. The scene re-forms on Snape and Lily sitting in a clearing. Snape tells Lily about the Ministry, and Lily asks if it's all actually real. Snape says it is for them, but it's not for Petunia. Lily asks if it'll matter that her parents are Muggles, and Snape hesitates but says it won't. They notice Petunia hiding behind them. She insults Snape's clothes and a branch breaks over her head. Lily accuses Snape of hurting Petunia on purpose.

Seeing Snape as a young boy shows Harry that Snape wasn't always a cantankerous person: he once was friends with Lily and represented her sole connection to the Wizarding world. Making the branch fall on Petunia suggests that Snape might hold some anti-Muggle sentiment, but at least, at this young age, he shows that he has the capacity to reevaluate these beliefs and come to a better and more generous understanding of how the world works. This ultimately demonstrates the potential power of love and friendship.



The scene changes and Harry and Snape watch Lily apologizing to Petunia on platform 9 3/4. Lily assures Petunia that she'll talk to Dumbledore about letting her come to Hogwarts, but Petunia cries and says she doesn't want to be a freak. Lily points out that Petunia wrote to Dumbledore and asked to come to Hogwarts, and Petunia realizes that Lily and Snape read Dumbledore's reply. The scene changes and Snape slips into a train car with Lily. He tries to cheer her up by saying that she should be in Slytherin, but young James taunts Snape. Sirius joins in, and Lily leads Snape away. Harry then watches Snape be sorted into Slytherin and Lily into Gryffindor.

Though Lily reaffirms her friendship with Snape in front of James and Sirius, it's telling that she then gets sorted into Gryffindor while Snape goes into Slytherin. With this, the novel shows how forces outside of their control began to act and shape these two young people into the adults they came to be, in which Snape turned to Voldemort and Lily became one of the most famous members of the resistance movement.



Harry finds himself following Snape and Lily across the grounds a few years later. Lily hates Snape's friends, who are interested in Dark magic, but Snape points out that James pulls crazy stunts and that something is off with Lupin. Lily says she heard about James saving Snape from what's under the Whomping Willow, which makes Snape angry. Lily angers in return. He says that James has a crush on Lily, which she ignores, but she says that Snape's friends are evil. Harry watches the scene he saw years ago, when James torments Snape after their O.W.L.s, and sees Snape and Lily fighting about him calling her a Mudblood. She accuses him of being a Death Eater and walks away.

The scene changes to years later. Dumbledore meets adult Snape and Snape shares that Voldemort thinks that the prophecy refers to Lily Potter and her son. He asks that Dumbledore help save Lily and offers to give anything in return. The scene re-forms in Dumbledore's office, as Dumbledore tells Snape that Harry is alive and that if he loved Lily, he needs to protect Harry when Voldemort returns. Years later, Snape paces and lists Harry's faults, and then Harry follows Snape and Dumbledore at the Yule Ball. They discuss the Dark Marks getting darker, and Snape says he won't flee if Voldemort calls him. Dumbledore suggests they Sort students too soon.

Back in Dumbledore's office, Snape does his best to save Dumbledore's blackened hand. Dumbledore comes to, and Snape asks why he put the cursed ring on. Snape says that Dumbledore has about a year to live, and Dumbledore brings up the fact that Draco is supposed to kill him. He tells Snape to help Draco, makes him promise to protect students if Voldemort takes over the school, and then asks Snape to kill him instead of letting Voldemort or his cronies torture him. Harry then watches Snape and Dumbledore walking on the grounds. Dumbledore says that he's giving Harry information that he can't share with Snape in case Voldemort tries to get it, and then tells Snape that Voldemort won't try to possess Harry.

In Dumbledore's office again, he tells Snape that when Voldemort starts keeping Nagini close to him, it will be time to tell Harry the truth: that when Voldemort tried to kill him and was blasted apart, his soul latched onto baby Harry, and as long as that bit of soul is there, Voldemort can't die. Dumbledore says that Harry has to die, and Voldemort has to do it. Snape is aghast and accuses Dumbledore of raising Harry like an animal for slaughter. Dumbledore asks if Snape cares for Harry, and Snape conjures his Patronus: a doe. He still loves Lily. The scene shifts, and Dumbledore's portrait tells Snape to plant the idea for the seven Harrys with Mundungus. Snape digs through Grimmauld Place, pockets the last page of Lily's letter, and then Phineas and Dumbledore's portrait tell Snape where to leave the sword for Harry.

Lily's behavior shows that, while she may feel affection for Snape on some level, her loyalties truly lie with the cause and with fighting Voldemort—and shows that Snape made his choice to give up her friendship when he chose to pledge himself to Voldemort. This also develops the idea that Snape loved Lily, even into adulthood, and therefore suggests that he has the capacity to at some point make better choices guided by this love.



Dumbledore's suggestion that they Sort students too soon implies that he believes that Snape isn't truly living up to the Slytherin ideals once he becomes a double agent. Helping Dumbledore requires bravery that's often not attributed to Slytherins and, instead, is a Gryffindor trait. With this, Dumbledore gives voice to the idea that Sorting doesn't do students any favors and, in the case of Snape, might be directly responsible for putting him in contact with Voldemort in the first place.



Snape's promise to protect the students if Voldemort takes over suggests that what's been happening at Hogwarts hasn't actually represented the worst of what could happen: Snape probably did what he could to not totally stamp out Ginny and Neville's resistance efforts, though there was certainly only so much he could do. Asking Snape to kill him shows that Dumbledore understands that, in order to die well, a person should greet death on their own terms—and in this case, this means a merciful death at Snape's hands.



With this, Dumbledore and Snape reveal that Harry is the final Horcrux. Snape's horror at learning this shows that he does have feelings, even if he's not Harry's biggest fan; he still recognizes that raising a child to die like this is unethical and, as far as he's concerned, makes all the other measures he's taken to protect Harry over the years moot. Learning that Snape was motivated by love to the end, however, allows Harry to begin to think more critically about his former Potionsmaster and see that he was a tortured soul, but not necessarily a bad person.



CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

On the floor of Dumbledore's office, Harry feels like he finally has the truth: he's not supposed to survive, and neither is Voldemort. Harry is terrified, but he doesn't consider running away. He realizes that, although Dumbledore betrayed him, it makes sense that there was a larger plan designed to kill as few as possible. Dumbledore knew that Harry wouldn't back out; Dumbledore's only miscalculation was that Nagini is still alive, though Ron and Hermione can take care of her. Harry decides to not say goodbye to Ron and Hermione and begins to walk through the castle under the Cloak. He bumps into Neville carrying Colin Creevy's body. Someone else takes it, and Harry tells Neville to kill the snake.

Harry puts the cloak back on, but stops dead when he sees Ginny comforting a girl. He feels as though he wants her to drag him home, but he thinks that Hogwarts is his home, just as it was home to Voldemort and Snape. Harry remembers the Snitch that Dumbledore left him. He pulls it out and whispers to it that it's going to die. The Resurrection Stone sits in the two halves, and Harry turns it over three times. James, Sirius, Lupin, and Lily all greet Harry. They say that dying is painless and praise Harry's bravery. Harry apologizes to Lupin for Lupin's death, but Lupin says he wants Teddy to grow up in a better world. The ghosts promise to stay close to Harry and keep him warm as he winds through dementors. They stop when they see Yaxley and Dolohov and follow them to a clearing.

The clearing is filled with Death Eaters, all watching Voldemort. Harry pulls off the Invisibility Cloak, stuffs it in his robes with his wand, and steps into the light. He drops the stone and the ghosts vanish. Death Eaters laugh, but Hagrid, tied to a tree, starts to shout. Harry watches Nagini but knows he can't kill the snake here. Voldemort lifts the [Elder Wand](#), and Harry sees a flash of green and then nothing.

Now, Harry must prepare himself to do what Dumbledore and Snape did: sacrifice himself for the cause, knowing that his death is the only way to ensure a better future going forward. Because Harry doesn't want to hurt others, it means that he has no interest in drawing this out or putting others in danger, even if others would willingly stand between Harry and Voldemort to stop Harry from dying. Allowing Neville in shows Harry passing the torch and recognizing the power of the community to carry out his goals.



Harry's realization that Hogwarts is his home and has also been home to Tom Riddle and Snape shows the power of the school: it can make misfit, orphaned boys feel as though they have a place where they belong and a place that's worth fighting for. Lupin's choice to brush off Harry's apology for his death shows that he understands the importance of sacrificing himself so his son, and others' children, can go on to live a life untroubled by Voldemort—a state of affairs that can only be achieved if he and others choose to sacrifice themselves.



In this moment, Harry understands that he has to trust in his community to finish what he started and deal with Voldemort himself. Choosing to die without finishing shows that Harry has finally decided to take the power of his community to heart.



CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Harry comes to, naked and entirely alone in a bright mist. He hears a noise of something struggling and wishes he had clothes. Robes appear and he puts them on. He begins to look around and sees that the thing that made the noise is some small naked child that looks flayed, shuddering under a bench. It scares Harry, but he approaches anyway. Dumbledore walks toward Harry and tells Harry that he can't help and then leads him away. They sit down. Dumbledore confirms that *he's* dead, but he says that he doesn't think *Harry* is. Harry says he *should've* died and didn't defend himself, but Dumbledore happily says that will help. At Dumbledore's urging, Harry deduces that Voldemort killed his own soul. Dumbledore assures Harry they can't help the flayed creature.

It's important to keep in mind that this entire conversation is a product of Harry's brain; Dumbledore is dead and isn't actually talking to Harry. Because of this, everything that Harry figures out or learns in this conversation is something that Harry already knew—he just needed someone like Dumbledore to spell it out for him. In this way, this conversation represents a passing of the torch of sorts, in which Harry discovers his own ability to act as a mentor and figure things out on his own.



Harry asks how he's alive if nobody died for him. Dumbledore waits for Harry to realize that Voldemort took Harry's blood, which will keep Harry alive because *Voldemort* is alive. Dumbledore explains that Harry was the unintended seventh Horcrux. He says that Voldemort doesn't take the time to learn about things he doesn't care about, like love, loyalty, house-elves, and children's stories. He says that taking Harry's blood and with it, Lily's sacrifice, keeps her sacrifice alive.

Harry asks why his wand broke Voldemort's borrowed wand. Though Dumbledore says he's not sure, he guesses that Voldemort strengthened his bond to Harry by taking his blood, and when they dueled that night, Harry's willingness to die changed both his and Voldemort's wands. Harry's wand recognized Voldemort when Voldemort tried to kill Harry the night Harry moved. They both agree that, minutes ago, Voldemort *failed* to kill Harry with his wand, and Harry says it seems like they're in King's Cross station.

Annoyed, Harry asks about the Deathly Hallows. Dumbledore looks guilty, asks for Harry's forgiveness, and suggests that he, like Voldemort, wanted to be the master of death. He says that Grindelwald came to Godric's Hollow pursuing the Hallows, as Ignotus Peverell's grave is there. Harry asks if he's the last of the Peverells, and Dumbledore confirms this. He says he had the [Elder Wand](#) and the Cloak when James died. Dumbledore says that Harry should despise him and reminds him of what happened to Ariana. He says he loved his family, but he was selfish and brilliant and Grindelwald was the same. They wanted to hunt for Hallows, and the ensuing fight killed Ariana.

Dumbledore says that, in the years after, Grindelwald acquired the [Elder Wand](#) and Dumbledore refused to be Minister of Magic—he fears he would've abused his power. He says that he put off dueling Grindelwald because he was afraid of figuring out the truth of who killed Ariana, but he finally got the wand. They discuss that Grindelwald tried to keep Voldemort from getting the wand, and then Harry asks if Dumbledore tried to use the Resurrection Stone. Dumbledore says he was unworthy to unite the Hallows: he took the Cloak out of selfish curiosity, not understanding that its power is that it can protect more than one person, and misunderstood how to properly use the stone. Harry, he says, is worthy, as he used them to enable his self-sacrifice. Harry's anger with Dumbledore disappears.

Readers familiar with the series might remember that Dumbledore seemed momentarily triumphant when he learned that Voldemort took Harry's blood—this is why; he suspected that Voldemort, who cares little for love, wouldn't understand the true implications of doing such a thing and because of this, inadvertently gave Harry a foothold in life.



What happened when Voldemort sent the killing curse at Harry moments ago is that the part of his soul encased in Harry died; Harry essentially died for himself and left Voldemort's soul vulnerable. Harry's sacrifice, however, also means that he's saving countless others whom Voldemort would like to kill, as Harry didn't intend to save himself—he intended to save everyone else.



In this moment, Dumbledore lays out how seeking the dead and digging into immortality can distract a person from how they should be living, given that he blames Ariana's death on his obsession with the Hallows. With this, he encourages Harry to continue to look forward to those who are alive and those who are yet to come, and to dedicate himself to helping them rather than reaching back for the dead—including for him. Harry, in other words, must move on from Dumbledore.



The idea that the Cloak is so powerful as a Hallow exactly because it can protect others is one that, in retrospect, carries through the entire series: Harry has spent a great deal of time with Ron and Hermione under the Cloak and, in addition to using it for mischief, they've all used it for a great deal of good. This, Dumbledore suggests, is what elevates it above the other Hallows, which exist more to better the person that possesses them than to improve the life of anyone else.



Harry asks why Dumbledore made the journey so difficult. Dumbledore admits that he didn't want Harry to seek the Hallows for the wrong reasons and says that he doesn't think Voldemort knew about the Hallows at all. He thought that Voldemort would go for the **Elder Wand** because Voldemort thought an unbeatable wand would solve the problem better than asking what Harry has that he doesn't. Harry confirms that Dumbledore wanted Snape to end up with the Elder Wand. After a moment, Harry asks if he has to go back. Dumbledore says he has a choice. Dumbledore says that if Harry goes back, he believes that he can defeat Voldemort. Harry sighs and asks Dumbledore if this is real or his imagination. Dumbledore says that it's in Harry's head, but that doesn't make it unreal.

Giving Harry the choice to return to life or not shows that it truly is choices that define a person. While Harry will certainly die a martyr if he chooses to stay dead, returning to life will make him even more of a hero and will allow him to go on to do even more good in the world. Dumbledore's assessment of why Voldemort is struggling with the Elder Wand stands as a final reminder that relying on power alone isn't enough to make a person successful. Instead, a person needs to dive into theory and knowledge, and doing this will allow a person to properly possess the wand.



CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Harry comes to lying facedown on the ground. Death Eaters quietly whisper and Harry opens his eyes a fraction. He sees Voldemort getting up and he wonders if they both collapsed and were unconscious. Voldemort sends Narcissa to check if Harry is dead. She feels his heart and quietly whispers to ask if Draco is alive. Harry confirms that he is, and Narcissa pronounces Harry dead. Harry realizes that she doesn't care if Voldemort wins; she just wants her family safe. Death Eaters celebrate and Voldemort performs the Cruciatus Curse on Harry, but it doesn't hurt. Voldemort tells Hagrid to carry Harry back through the forest and Hagrid sobs as they walk. Harry hears Hagrid insult the centaurs for not fighting.

The fact that Voldemort also fell to the ground confirms that his curse actually killed a part of his soul, not Harry. Narcissa's desire to get to Draco shows Harry that, at this point, he has allies in all sorts of places if he's willing to trade information for help. This makes Narcissa a more complex character, as well, as it shows that she's driven mostly by love for her family and isn't actually sold on Voldemort's vision for the world.



At the edge of the forest, the procession stops. Voldemort magnifies his voice and announces that Harry is dead. He asks everyone to come outside to and then leads Hagrid up toward the castle. Harry peeks and sees that Nagini is around Voldemort's shoulders. At the doors of Hogwarts, McGonagall screams in grief and Ron, Hermione, and Ginny join in. Voldemort silences them. Ron shouts that Harry beat Voldemort and everyone starts yelling, but Voldemort silences them and says that Harry died trying to sneak away. Someone runs at Voldemort, but Voldemort Disarms him. Bellatrix laughs: it's Neville. Neville refuses to join the Death Eaters.

What Voldemort says here shows that he's trying to warp the story and turn Harry into a coward, not a martyr. However, this is hard to do when Harry's community is so dedicated to him and when they believe so strongly in what Harry fought for. This shows that Voldemort once again underestimated the power of love and the power of community, as it seems as though it's going to be a struggle to subdue this emotional crowd.



Harry watches as Voldemort Summons the [Sorting Hat](#). Voldemort declares that Slytherin will be the only House going forward, curses Neville to be still, puts the hat on Neville's head, and lights it on fire. Suddenly, Grawp starts running at the giants, yelling for Hagrid; Harry hears centaurs running toward them; and Neville breaks the curse, pulls the sword of Gryffindor out of the hat, and kills Nagini. Harry rolls over, pulls on the Cloak, and casts a shield between Voldemort and Neville. The centaurs scatter the Death Eaters while thestrals dive at the giants, and everyone is forced into the castle. Harry continues to cast shields and protect his friends as even more people arrive and join the fray. The house-elves, led by Kreacher, swarm in and attack Death Eaters with knives.

Harry edges into the Great Hall and watches the battles, trying to get closer to Voldemort. He sees Bellatrix shoot a Killing Curse and narrowly miss Ginny, and Mrs. Weasley furiously begins to duel Bellatrix. Harry is unsure of what to do, but Mrs. Weasley's curse hits Bellatrix in the chest. Bellatrix falls backwards, dead. Harry sees Voldemort blast McGonagall, Slughorn, and Kingsley back. Harry casts a shield again and finally reveals himself. He instructs everyone to let him finish Voldemort alone, and he and Voldemort taunt each other. Voldemort insists that Harry is still alive because of chance, but Harry says that he sacrificed himself for his friends and now Voldemort can't hurt them.

Voldemort looks momentarily concerned and then sneeringly asks if Harry is going to win because of love or because he has better magic. Harry says he has both, defends Dumbledore, and Voldemort insists that he orchestrated Dumbledore's death. Harry calmly explains that *Dumbledore* orchestrated his own death, that Snape served Dumbledore, and that Snape loved Lily. Voldemort insists that Dumbledore just wanted to keep the [Elder Wand](#) from him and pass it on to Snape, but he insists that he mastered the wand. Harry asks Voldemort to try to feel remorse, which seems to shock Voldemort more than anything else. Harry says that because Dumbledore planned his death, the wand's power would've died with him. Just holding the wand doesn't make him its master. Draco won the wand from Dumbledore, and Harry won the wand from Draco.

Declaring that there won't be any more Sorting at Hogwarts shows that Voldemort understands that this is a battle about the fate of the school. That Neville is able to pull the sword out of the Sorting Hat shows that the hat itself is still dedicated to the vision of the school put forth by Dumbledore, in which sorting might have its faults, but it ultimately provides richness, nuance, and perks—like the sword—that makes Hogwarts a better place. The involvement of Kreacher and the centaurs shows that Harry's loyalty to these non-human creatures is now paying off.



Given that Voldemort seems to be evenly matched against the professors and Order members, Harry has a point—Voldemort clearly isn't the most powerful person in the room anymore. He has also lost all of his community, now that the Malfoys have basically defected and now that Bellatrix is dead. With this, the battle shifts to be Voldemort against everyone else, and given the way that the series has consistently touted the power of community, it seems as though Voldemort is in a tough spot.



Giving Voldemort the chance to repent is, in this moment, one of the kindest things that Harry can do—and by choosing to give Voldemort this opportunity, Harry throws Voldemort's evil into even sharper relief. Voldemort isn't giving people the chance to repent, while Harry is. Harry also shows in this moment that he understands that Dumbledore was right, and knowledge is power. Because Harry knows who the true master of the Elder Wand is, he's able to trust that he has the upper hand and that Voldemort won't come out of this alive.



As the sun emerges over the horizon, Voldemort shoots a Killing Curse at Harry and Harry responds with a Disarming spell. Gold flames erupt between them, the **Elder Wand** goes flying, and Harry catches it as Voldemort dies from his own curse. People begin to scream and celebrate. They all want to touch Harry. They move Voldemort's body away and everyone sits at the House tables, though not according to their Houses. Harry finds himself next to Luna, who suggests he get some peace and quiet. She creates a diversion as Harry slips on his cloak. He decides to not talk to Ginny now and sees the Malfoy family huddled together. Harry finds Ron and Hermione and leads them out. He tells them what he saw in the Pensieve and what happened in the forest.

They reach the headmaster's office and the gargoyle lets them up. The headmasters' portraits applaud, and Dumbledore's crying portrait beams at Harry. Harry tells Dumbledore he dropped the Resurrection Stone in the forest and doesn't want to go look for it. Dumbledore agrees that this is a good plan. Harry holds up the **Elder Wand** and says he doesn't want it. He pulls out his original wand and repairs it with the Elder Wand. Harry says he's going to put the Elder Wand back and confirms that, if he dies a natural death, the power of the wand will die too.

EPILOGUE

Nineteen years later, on September first, Harry comforts his daughter Lily and Ginny tells their sons to stop arguing about what House Albus will be in. James Jr. stops arguing and goes through the barrier. Harry and Ginny assure Albus that they'll write often and they go through the barrier onto the platform. They meet up with Ron, Hermione, and their children, Rose and Hugo, at the final train car. Ron jokes that he's going to disinherit Rose and Albus if they don't end up in Gryffindor, but Hermione and Ginny comfort their terrified children. Ron points to Draco, who nods slightly as he puts his young son on the train. He tells Rose to beat Draco's son on every test.

James Jr. reappears and breathlessly says that Teddy is kissing Victoire. None of the adults are bothered, much to James's disappointment. James rolls his eyes when Ginny asks him to give Neville their love and tells Albus to watch out for thestrals before racing onto the train. Harry reassures Albus that the thestrals are gentle and hugs him. Albus whispers and asks what will happen if he's in Slytherin. Ginny looks away as Harry crouches down, calls Albus by his full name, Albus Severus, and says that he was named for a brave Slytherin headmaster. He says that Slytherin will be lucky to have him, and says that the **Sorting Hat** listens to requests. Albus leaps onto the train and Harry waves as it disappears. He touches his scar, which hasn't hurt for nineteen years.

Because Harry is secure in the truth of what he knows, he understands that Voldemort doesn't stand a chance: brute strength, in this case, means nothing when put up against knowledge. Everyone sitting at different House tables symbolizes that, at this point in history, Hogwarts now truly stands for diversity and community more than ever before. Everyone, even some Slytherins (like Snape and Slughorn) came out to fight for the school and for what they know was right. Now, Hogwarts can move forward and promote diversity and tolerance.



By choosing to forgo the Resurrection Stone and the Elder Wand, Harry shows that he's taken what he's learned to heart: it's better to use his Cloak to protect others and to pass on his knowledge to future generations than it is to remain fixated on power and extracting impossible answers from the dead.



Seeing Harry with his children—and Ron and Hermione with theirs—allows the reader to see how Harry is putting what he learned into practice. He can assure them that Hogwarts is a place where they'll find their home, and that they'll find community there no matter what house they end up in. Draco's nod toward Ron, Harry, and Hermione suggests that he still remembers what Harry did for him and, like Harry, he wants his son to have a good experience at Hogwarts.



That Albus is afraid of being in Slytherin suggests that, while Voldemort might be gone, the fear surrounding Slytherin persists: the echoes of the past still make people question if good wizards can come out of Slytherin. Harry's advice that Snape was from Slytherin and that Albus will possibly have the opportunity to choose which House he goes into plants the seed for Albus to learn that he can choose what kind of a wizard he wants to be, no matter what House he ends up in.



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